

Introductory remarks for the Prime Minister of Malaysia, the Honourable Dato' Seri Anwar Bin Ibrahim, Gareth Evans Oration, Australian National University, Canberra

**Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Speech (check against delivery)**

07 March 2024

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attending here today.

I acknowledge the many distinguished guests, including members of the diplomatic corps.

I acknowledge and thank Prime Minister Anwar and Dr Wan Azizah for being here.

I acknowledge my counterpart the Malaysian Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Malaysian Minister of Youth and Sports.

It's a pleasure to be here today at the Gareth Evans Oration, and I acknowledge the man himself, as well his successor and my predecessor, Julie Bishop.

And if I can thank Julie very much for her generous introduction and for her service to this country.

I think on the list of the longest serving women in a Cabinet, she was second and I think is now third.

So myself, Amanda Vanstone and Julie Bishop. It's a group of which I'm very proud to be part, alongside you.

Having two such esteemed previous foreign ministers here really does feel like being back at university, presenting to professors.

But luckily, the Prime Minister of Malaysia is the one who is presenting and he is more than equipped for this task.

And most importantly, Prime Minister – thank you very much for being here today to give the Gareth Evans Oration, and indeed thank you for being here in Australia for the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, which concluded in Melbourne yesterday – you honour us with your presence in our country.

I will introduce the Prime Minister to the stage in just a moment.

But first I wanted to say something about Gareth Evans.

Gareth has never seen any inherent limit to the potential for Australian influence in our region and around the world.

Australia isn't one of the great powers, a country that has to be listened to and worked with because of the sheer size of population, economy or military or industrial weight.

But like our Southeast Asian neighbours, our size does not reflect how much we have to offer our region and the world.

Yet it does mean we have to be more clever about how we advance our interests, in peace, stability and prosperity.

We have to be more strategic in how we ensure our region enjoys a strategic balance where small and medium countries aren't dominated by major powers and we can all decide our own destinies.

Gareth Evans was never limited by the assumption of a small Australia.

His capacity for influence is perhaps no more evident than in his work to develop the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements that helped bring peace to Cambodia.

Our creative role in those talks and our support for the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia is still spoken of in the highest terms – by the Cambodian government, by opposition groups, by citizens and civil society and so many others across our region and the world.

It was and remains one of Australia's greatest diplomatic achievements.

It is a template for taking the world as it is and shaping it for the better.

And I hope you in this room will be part of your legacy in years to come.

Now, we have another great statesman here with us today – Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

And I begin by recognising you join us on the eve of the tenth anniversary of the disappearance of MH370.

While the searches have not been successful, and families continue to endure such heartache, the effort to find MH370 demonstrates the close cooperation between our countries through difficult times.

Prime Minister, as a proud Sabahan-Australian, it is a singular honour for me to introduce you today.

In doing so I want to recognise the profound influence you have had not only on Malaysia but more broadly on the development of democracy across the region.

You survived your own particular political purgatory.

But notwithstanding the political and personal difficulties you faced, you never lost your influence – indeed, you have only become more influential, and your ability to inspire has become ever greater.

Without taking anything away from your past, present and future achievements in office it is fair to describe you as one of that vanishingly rare species of politician who has been profoundly influential not only in office, but also in opposition.

Not only when you have held the levers of national power, but also when you most decidedly have not.

You've had the courage to live the life of a true democrat.

And you have shaped the character of the national and regional polity in profound ways.

Malaysia, Australia, all of the countries of our region have had their own paths.

Many nations have been shaped by powerful independence personalities whose lives will forever be tied to the struggle of their nations for freedom and self-rule.

You, though, have played a unique role in Malaysia's history in the development of its democracy, its political practice, and the way it defines its own path in Southeast Asia.

As an advocate for respect and tolerance in troubling times – a message that we should emphasise today.

We both live in countries that have communities deeply affected by the conflict in the Middle East.

And while neither of our countries are in the Middle East, we both have voices that are respected there.

It is so important for us to continue to use our voices to advocate for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and humanitarian access, the release of hostages, and for the protection of civilians.

To use our voices for a pathway out of this conflict and an enduring peace, with an independent Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

Just as we continue to promote peaceful and respectful dialogue at home.

Regrettably, here in Australia, we see people who claim to champion human rights and justice behaving in ways that show little regard for either.

Shocking attempts at intimidation and character assassination.

Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Some are intent on reproducing hatred and social conflict here – pushing absolutist agendas ahead of respect for peaceful disagreement that healthy democracy demands.

This is not a country where you should be pushed to adopt an absolutist position of one side or another side.

We are a pluralist country, allowing for many different viewpoints, where we are united by respect for each other's humanity and for each other's right to live in peace.

Prime Minister, across the years, you have been a great friend to Australia and to Australians and I am hopeful that this next stage in Australia-Malaysia relations is one where we see further cooperation – across so many areas, not least to support your personal goal to strengthen Malaysia's democratic institutions.

Democracy is always a work in progress – and progress comes with many setbacks, as you know better than anyone in this room.

But democracy's enduring wisdom is in its ability to evolve to tackle new challenges, as human society itself continues to change.

So thank you for coming today, and for returning to Australia.

Please know the esteem with which you are held here, how welcome you are as a guest in our country, and how honoured we are to host you here today.

As the Malaysian saying goes: 'Ke bukit sama didaki, ke lurah sama dituruni'

So in that spirit of friendship and respect, Dato' Seri, I invite you to the podium to deliver the 2024 Gareth Evans Oration.

Thank you.

Observer Research Foundation: A conversation with the Foreign Minister

Speech (check against delivery)

Lady Shri Ram College

Location

New Delhi, India

23 November 2023

Can I first thank the Principal, Dr Sharma, for those very kind remarks.

Thanking for the work you and your colleagues do, in helping to develop the next generation of leaders, who happen to be women, for India.

Professor Pant, to members of my delegation, but I particularly want to acknowledge the Australian High Commissioner Philip Green, to students here today, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you. And thanks to the Observer Research Foundation for hosting this event.

Thank you also for the very gracious remarks about the cricket. It was such an honour to play a team like yours, the Indian team, such an extraordinary team. But I want to say this – Travis Head is from my home town, so we care a lot about what happened yesterday.

I wanted to start with partnership.

The ORF plays an important role in engaging young people in foreign policy, through their Young Voices blog and their survey of young Indians attitudes to the world.

Those surveys often find young Indians see Australia as one of their closest partners for the future.

I hope that's right, because that is how we see you.

Yesterday, along with my ministerial counterparts, I was pleased to announce that we will host 'Raisina Downunder' in Australia in 2024.

This is my second visit to India this year – and this marks the 19th Australian ministerial visit to India and six Indian ministerial visits to Australia in 2023.

Who could forget those iconic images of our prime ministers in Ahmedabad – and of course, who would want to forget the images of Australia's glorious 50-overs World Cup victory there two days ago. A credit to India – an amazing tournament and a

fantastic side. Regardless of the outcome, this team will be remembered as one of the greats.

I am here in Delhi with the Deputy Prime Minister, who is also Australia's Defence Minister, for meetings with India's Defence and External Affairs ministers.

The context for such meetings becomes ever more serious.

We see more and more conflict in the world.

Russia continues to wage its illegal and immoral war on Ukraine.

And the Middle East is in crisis. Hamas continues to hold more than 200 hostages, and Gaza is in the grip of a humanitarian catastrophe.

We are working with countries with influence in the region, to help protect and support civilians, to help prevent conflict from spreading, and to reinforce the need for a just and enduring peace.

And our own region faces circumstances in some ways unprecedented.

Tensions have risen between states with overlapping claims and disputed borders.

Compounding that have been dangerous encounters on land, in the air and at sea.

China continues to modernise its military at a pace and scale not seen in the world for nearly a century, with little transparency or assurance about its strategic intent.

North Korea continues its destabilising behaviour with its ongoing nuclear weapons program and ballistic missile launches.

All of us know that the region we live in is being reshaped.

The only question is whether we choose to either play our part in the reshaping, or we choose to let others decide our future.

Australia and India are making a choice to do what we can – together and separately – to shape a region that is peaceful and predictable, that is governed by accepted rules and norms, where all of us can cooperate, trade and thrive.

Where a larger country does not determine the fate of a smaller country.

Where each country can pursue its own aspirations.

Where no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

This vision for our region is grounded in respect for sovereignty.

What is sovereignty? Fundamentally it is about being able to make your own decisions, and shaping our own destinies...

This is the thing about sovereignty; it might be exercised alone but it is best assured when we are working together.

Because none of us can achieve a region with the attributes I am describing by ourselves.

The less unified we are, the less we all operate by the same rules, the more likely it is that vulnerabilities will be exploited.

That's why we are so committed to strong partnerships like the Quad and mutually agreed rules, which enable more stability and choices, which in turn means greater autonomy and sovereignty.

Just as each country has a responsibility to help maintain conditions for peace, we also have a responsibility to play our part in collective deterrence of aggression.

By having strong defence capabilities of our own, and by working with partners like India investing in their own capabilities, we change the calculus for any potential aggressor.

Our foreign and defence policies are two essential and interdependent parts of Australia's approach.

That is why these meetings matter – it is about contributing to the strategic balance of power that keeps the peace in our region, where we have strategic reassurance through diplomacy and military deterrence which supports it.

As India knows well, there is not enough strategic trust in our world and in our region.

Military power is expanding, but measures to constrain military conflict are not – and there are insufficient concrete mechanisms for averting it.

The risk of conflict is of deep concern to us all.

That is why Australia continues to encourage mutual strategic reassurance, military risk reduction measures and on opening lines of communication at all levels.

We all have a stake or a part to play in the Indian Ocean.

Because Australia and India share this region and we share a future.

We are also joint custodians of the Indian Ocean. And we share an interest in the countries of the Indian Ocean being prosperous and peaceful and resilient.

Australia has one of the longest Indian Ocean coastlines of any country and we are responsible for its largest search and rescue zone.

As Dr Jaishankar has said, "the separation of the Indian and Pacific oceans as distinct compartments looks less and less tenable. We are quite visibly in each others' proximity and to pretend otherwise is unrealistic."

This was recognised in Australia's Defence Strategic Review, which included the north-eastern Indian Ocean, alongside Southeast Asia and the Pacific, as Australia's primary area of strategic military interest.

It is a conduit for global trade and energy production.

Its sea lines of communications help underpin our security and prosperity.

The Indian Ocean is already bustling with more than a third of the world's bulk cargo traffic and two-thirds of global oil shipments.

The Indian Ocean is already essential to building a regional balance.

And it is only becoming more important. The rise is partly driven by demography.

India is now home to the world's largest population, and countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh will experience the so called 'demographic dividend' as they host some of the largest youth labour forces in the world until 2040.

So it only makes sense, with the Indian Ocean's importance, and its status as a point of confluence for strategic competition, we are boosting our engagement in the region.

We've opened new posts at Malé, Bengaluru and Kolkata. Next year, Australia will host the Indian Ocean Conference in Perth.

I look forward to welcoming Dr Jaishankar, as well as heads of government, ministers and senior delegates to Australia to discuss our priorities for the region.

India's prosperity matters to Australia, just as our prosperity matters to you.

Geography may have decided we share regional interests, but we have decided to be friends.

This was a choice.

Fifty years ago, in 1973, Australia's Prime Minister Gough Whitlam visited India.

It was the first visit to India by an Australian Prime Minister in 14 years.

Whitlam said this at the time, "Here are two great democracies bordering the Indian Ocean, both members of the Commonwealth, both deeply dedicated to world peace, both with Federal systems, both holding great institutions in common."

The Albanese Government is proud to take forward the Whitlam legacy of engagement with India.

We make the same choice Whitlam did, to be closer friends with India.

Our prime ministers have met five times this year – including once in Sydney and twice in India.

Our countries are partners in almost every pursuit except cricket...

Working together through our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, through the Quad, and through regional architecture and the multilateral system.

We are growing our economic partnership and looking to deepen two-way trade and investment.

We are launching new climate initiatives in green steel and hydrogen, critical minerals and innovation and technology.

The close cooperation between Australia and India that Prime Minister Whitlam envisaged has come to pass.

The relationship also benefits from the legacy of Prime Minister Whitlam's changes to immigration policy for Australia.

Half of the Australian population was born overseas or has a parent who was born overseas.

That includes me.

It means when Australians look across the world, we see ourselves, just as the world sees itself reflected in us.

This matters here today.

One in every 25 Australians claims Indian heritage – our fastest-growing and second-largest diaspora community.

This is something we celebrate.

Australia launched the Centre for Australia-India Relations during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Australia in May, at an event attended by some 20,000 members of the diaspora.

The Centre is harnessing the energy and knowledge of Australia's Indian community to grow our economic and political links.

The million-strong Indian tourists and students that visit Australia each year also contribute to this goal.

And it is in pursuit of this goal that I am pleased to announce a new fellowship program.

These new Maitri fellowships will see Indian researchers spend six months to two years at an Australian institution and Australian think tankers spend six months at an Indian institution.

We recognise the important role that thinktanks, civil society and other stakeholders play in this relationship.

Australia and India have a proud history as democracies that foster academic excellence and welcome a broad range of views.

At a time when pluralism and democracy are being challenged worldwide, the next generation of Indians and Australians have a special responsibility to strengthen the institutions that we hold dear.

I had the opportunity to hear from India's leading thinkers yesterday on the impact of gender on foreign, trade and development policy.

I spoke to them of my own party's commitment to having women in leadership positions.

Having women at the decision-making table is not just the right thing to do.

It leads to better decisions being made. We bring a wider perspective, a wider set of experiences, to those fora which makes decisions and that is a good thing.

I have the privilege of serving in a Government that is more than half women.

And to have been sworn in alongside the most diverse parliament in Australia's history.

We believe our multicultural democracy and the pluralism that accompanies it is essential to our ability to shape the region we live in. We believe this diversity is one of our greatest strengths.

Australia sees the world as it is, but we seek to shape it for the better. We want to do that with you. We want to seize the challenges of this moment, but also seizing the opportunities of the decade ahead.

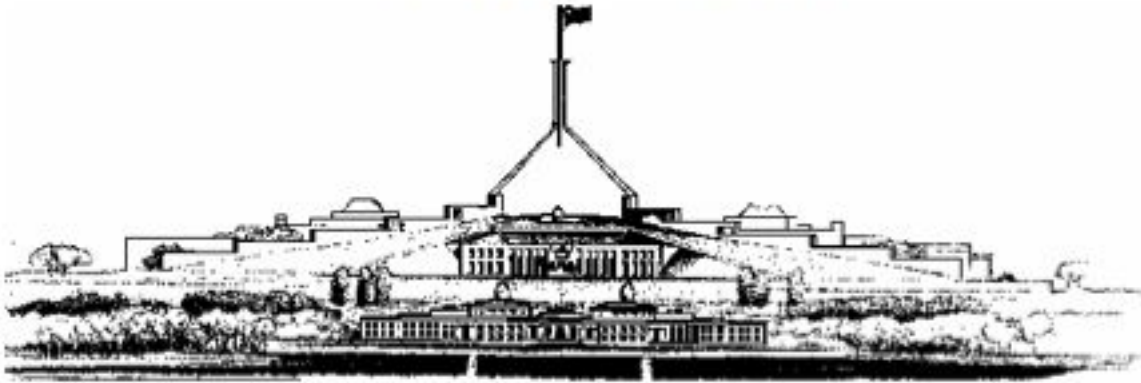
I want to end on this point, I have always believed that we are a stronger community, a stronger society, a stronger nation when all of our citizens' aspirations and capacities can be fully realised.

So in everything that you do, as young women who have the privilege of attending such an extraordinary college, please remember your education, your opportunities – they are a great thing for you, but I truly believe they are a great thing for your country.



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

MOTIONS

Middle East

SPEECH

Thursday, 9 November 2023

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 9 November 2023	Source Senate
Page 5355	Proof No
Questioner	Responder
Speaker Wong, Sen Penny	Question No.

Senator WONG (South Australia—Minister for Foreign Affairs and Leader of the Government in the Senate) (15:08): It is right to say there is a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. It is right to say, as I have said, that the loss of life—loss of innocent lives, of women and children, civilians—is devastating. I would make the point that we are seeking to engage with others, including Israel but also the other countries of the region and the Palestinian authority, to put our voice to efforts to try and ensure that there is a humanitarian pause in the fighting and that the conflict does not spread more broadly, which will result in the loss of more life.

I understand those who want to make a political point in this chamber, and I understand you did so earlier in the week. What I would say is this: the people of Gaza cannot wait for the parties to this conflict to agree to a ceasefire, so we are joining the international community, including the G7, in calling for pauses in the hostilities, because we understand that food, water, fuel, medicine and other essential assistance must be delivered into Gaza. I would also make this point: there were some assertions made by the Greens' spokesperson then in very emotional terms. What this government has said is that, in affirming Israel's right to defend itself, we have consistently emphasised that the way Israel defends itself matters. We understand it is difficult to defeat a craven terrorist group—

An honourable senator interjecting—

Senator WONG: I listened to you—that has burrowed itself in civilian infrastructure. I make this point to Israel. Israel is a democratic nation state, like Australia, pledged to the rule of law, and the standards we democracies seek and accept are high. So, when Israel's friends, including Australia, urge Israel to exercise restraint and protect civilian lives, it is critical that Israel listens. This is because innocent civilians in Gaza do deserve protection. Women and children—innocent civilians—should not pay for the crimes and provocations of Hamas. And it is also to prevent escalation of conflict throughout Israel's own neighbourhood.

I have said publicly, some days ago, that the international community will not accept ongoing civilian deaths. I would also make this point: international humanitarian law requires the application of principles of distinction, of proportionality and of precaution in military operations. That is the position the Australian government continues to take in this extremely difficult conflict—a conflict which began with terrorist acts by an organisation which is dedicated to the destruction of the State of Israel. We are seeking to engage with the international community to do what we can to protect civilian lives, and we know that, ultimately, peace in this region must come from a political process, a durable peace which does lead to a two-state solution, where both Palestinians and Israelis can live in peace and security behind internationally recognised borders.

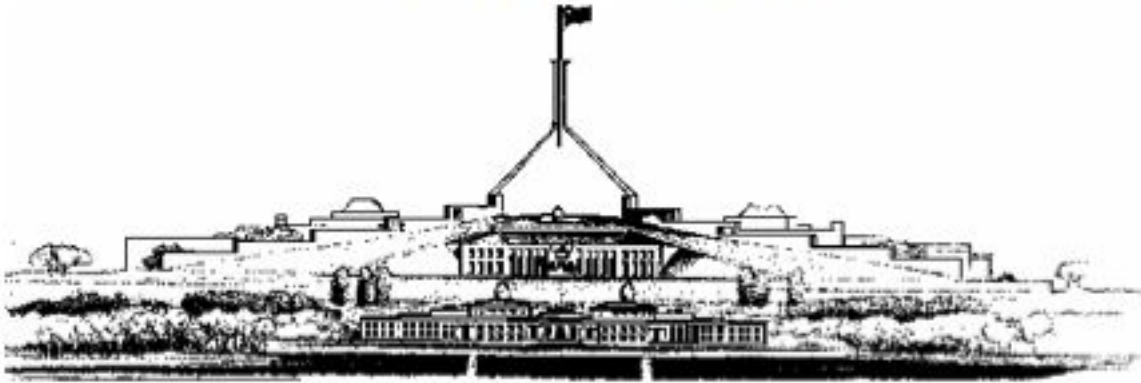
Australia has been, and will continue to be, part of the community of nations that is urging humanitarian pauses in hostilities so that there can be aid to civilians, support to civilians and some modicum of safety for civilians. We will continue to urge Israel to comply with international law, including international humanitarian law, as I have outlined, and we will continue to do all we can with other countries in the world to move to a political process which ensures that we do not see the continuation of the sort of devastation and the loss of civilian life that we have been seeing.

I understand this is a deeply difficult, emotional and distressing issue for so many Australians on both sides of this debate, and how we approach our differences of views about their appropriate policy matters. It matters to the people in the Australian community, and it matters to the cohesion of our wonderful, vibrant multicultural community, so many of whom, sadly, are suffering this day.



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

STATEMENTS

Occupied Palestinian Territories: Casualties

SPEECH

Tuesday, 14 November 2023

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

Date Tuesday, 14 November 2023	Source Senate
Page 5531	Proof No
Questioner	Responder
Speaker Wong, Sen Penny	Question No.

Senator WONG (South Australia—Minister for Foreign Affairs and Leader of the Government in the Senate) (12:06): I seek leave to make a short statement.

The PRESIDENT: Leave is granted for five minutes.

Senator WONG: Well, that was quite an inflammatory contribution. It was a hurtful contribution to suggest that somehow the only person in this chamber who cares about lives lost—

Senator Faruqi interjecting—

Senator WONG: I listened to you in silence, Senator Faruqi.

Senator McKim interjecting—

Senator WONG: I listened to her in silence, Senator. It was hurtful to suggest the only person in this chamber who cares about the loss of life is Senator Faruqi. That is not the case. We all care about the loss of life. The motion you voted against talked about every innocent life.

This is possibly not the time for a policy discussion, but I noticed in that contribution there was not one mention of terrorism, of Hamas, of hostages. This is not a binary debate. This is a deeply difficult, tragic, complex debate which has a long history and the horrific events of 7 October, and your party declined to support the motion where the parliament condemned them. I would ask the Greens political party to reflect on how they are handling this debate. I would ask them to reflect on whether this is a time when you want to make political differences about political parties or whether this is a time when all of us, as political leaders, might actually need to ensure that we don't amplify the distress and grief that we all know is in our communities—in the Jewish community, too, after the single biggest loss of life since the Holocaust, on any day, as well as in our Palestinian, Arabic and Islamic communities. Maybe our job is not to amplify that distress. Maybe our job is not to foment division in the hope that there is some political advantage. Maybe our job as leaders is to try—

Senator Shoebridge: Is to call for a ceasefire.

Senator WONG: Here we go again. Maybe your job, as a leader, is not to chant a slogan and not to amplify distress into anger and violence, which is what we have seen. Maybe your job—

Senator Shoebridge: Stop the killing and call for a ceasefire.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Senator WONG: as leaders, is to ensure that we do not allow this to divide our country. Our caucus represents the breadth of Australia, and I'm so deeply proud—

The PRESIDENT: Minister Wong, please resume your seat. Senator Faruqi?

Senator Faruqi: President, I have a point of order. Senator Wong is casting aspersions and basically insinuating—

The PRESIDENT: Senator Faruqi—

Senator Faruqi: Could you listen to my point of order, please?

The PRESIDENT: I've heard your point of view. Resume your seat. There is no point of order, and I will remind all senators in this place that Senator Faruqi was listened to in respectful silence. I expect that for any other speaker who seeks the call, and that silence needs to come from across the chamber.

Senator WONG: I would make the point that Senator Faruqi's statement in large part attacked the Labor Party, and now she talks about aspersions. Well, you know what my statement is? I believe leadership is not amplifying distress so that it leads to anger and violence. I believe leadership is trying to hold our country together to unify our community and stand against all forms of prejudice and hatred, because we, as Australians, value and treasure our peaceful community. We treasure unity. We treasure the values of inclusion and acceptance.

I would say to the Greens political party: you have heard what I have said about the suffering of civilians. You have heard what we have said from the beginning about the need for Israel to observe international law. You have also heard us say that any ceasefire cannot be one-sided, because we know what Hamas is. There are legitimate political differences, but to come in here, Senator Faruqi, and suggest that we do not care about people dying is really—you talk about aspersions. It is very distressing to my caucus and, I suspect, to many people around the country.

This is an international crisis. It is a humanitarian catastrophe. We are seeing loss of life which is harrowing—I think that was the word I used. Let us not have politicians here in Australia using this crisis as another issue to campaign on. All of us in this place should remember each other's humanity. We should all remember each other's humanity. We are all Australian. All of us in this place have a job to do, and that is advocating the protection of civilians, working for peace and keeping our country unified.

s22

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

[16:19]

CHAIR: I welcome Senator the Hon. Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs, representing the Prime Minister; and Mr Martin Hehir, deputy secretary and chief operating officer, and other officers of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Minister or Mr Hehir, do either of you have opening statements?

Senator Wong: I do. I'd like to make some brief remarks at the outset of these budget estimates. Firstly, on the budget itself, it's a budget for every Australian from a government working for all Australians, a budget about the two things that have driven the government for the past two years—cost-of-living relief and a future made in Australia. The cost of living is, as the Prime Minister said, the government's No. 1 priority, and we are delivering a tax cut to every taxpayer and a \$300 energy rebate to every household.

We're continuing to help Australians get the health care they need. The budget contains 29 more free Medicare urgent care clinics, and we're freezing the cost of PBS medicines. The government is also investing in education, wiping \$3 billion from student debt and introducing prac payments for nursing, teaching, midwifery and social-work students.

We also understand Australians need affordable housing and we need to build more homes right across the country. The Homes for Australia Plan the government has announced invests billions to do just that. There has been an increase to fee-free TAFE to train more tradies to build them. So this budget does build on cost-of-living measures the government has already taken, such as cheaper child care, cheaper medicines and fee-free TAFE.

While tackling the challenges of today, we are also focused, as the Prime Minister has said, on setting the country up for success in the long term with a future made in Australia, taking advantage of the transformative opportunities with clean energy and new technology, strengthening our defence industry and capability, and investing in strategic industries. Making more things in Australia will mean creating more secure, well-paid jobs in our suburbs and regions.

I might also briefly add on some issues abroad that the Prime Minister has commented on recently. You may recall that the Prime Minister and I have both said in relation to Rafah that we messaged the Netanyahu government: do not go down this path. The international community has been one on this. What we have seen in the past 24 hours reinforces why we and the international community issued this warning. The death and destruction in Rafah is horrific. This human suffering is unacceptable. We reiterate to the government of Israel: this cannot continue. We must see an immediate humanitarian ceasefire so that civilians can be protected, and Australia continues to support the work of the United States, Qatar and Egypt to that end. We continue to call for the release of all hostages by Hamas and for Israel to allow aid to flow at scale, as directed by the International Court of Justice.

Finally, I want to again extend Australia's sympathies for our brothers and sisters in Papua New Guinea following the devastating landslide, about which the Prime Minister spoke on indulgence in the House today. Australia stands with the people of Papua New Guinea. We grieve with them, we hold out hope for the missing and we wish strength to those who are now desperately searching. We have provided an initial \$2.5 million in humanitarian assistance, including emergency relief supplies, logistical support from the Australian Defence Force and expertise on geohazards to inform early recovery efforts. I made clear to my counterpart, and the Prime Minister has made clear to his, that we stand ready to provide additional support at the request of the Papua New Guinean government.

s22

Senator Wong: Thank you, Chair. I thought it would be appropriate to begin by updating the committee on the Australian government's response to the crisis in the Middle East. I acknowledge the cooperation of the committee in agreeing that our officials who are dealing with that crisis will attend today for a limited period of time. Obviously I don't consider this statement to be part of that time.

The Australian government has three core responsibilities in this crisis. One is to do all we can to keep Australia unified, to keep our social cohesion, and to make sure, as part of that, that the community feels heard. Senators may have heard my opening statement at Prime Minister and Cabinet estimates on Monday and further discussion on social cohesion in Home Affairs estimates.

There are two core Australian government responsibilities in my portfolio. The first is to support Australians who wish to leave to do so, and I want to thank all from my department, both in Canberra and at our overseas posts. I want to thank the Australian Defence Force and the airlines who have been part of this effort. We have coordinated and assisted more than 600 Australians seeking to leave Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We continue to assist Australians who want to leave Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

We are supporting Australians in the West Bank on departure options, such as transport to Jordan with our international partners, and accommodation. We are in contact with 79 individuals who are seeking to leave Gaza. We are deeply distressed that international efforts to secure civilian passage out of Gaza, efforts Australia has engaged in and is actively supporting, are yet to be successful. DFAT continues to advise do not travel to Lebanon due to the volatile security situation and the risk of the security situation deteriorating further.

These points bring me to the second core Australian government responsibility in my portfolio, and that is to work with other countries who share our goal of containing this conflict, of seeing an enduring peace in the Middle East grounded in a two-state solution where Israelis and Palestinians can live securely behind internationally recognised borders. Australia has unequivocally condemned the attacks on Israel by Hamas, targeting and murder of civilians, including women and children, taking of hostages and indiscriminate rocket fire. We continue to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

We stand with Israel and recognise its inherent right to defend itself. We mourn the devastating loss of Israeli and Palestinian life. We mourn with Jewish communities in Australia. And, knowing that more Jews were killed in this attack than in any single day since the Holocaust, we all understand how it brings back that trauma. We mourn with Palestinian communities in Australia who have lost thousands of their kin and who fear for loved ones in the dire humanitarian situation. And we condemn Hamas, a terrorist organisation that does not represent the Palestinian people and undermines the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is dire and human suffering is widespread. Australia has consistently called for the protection of civilian life. We have announced now \$25 million in humanitarian assistance. We have consistently called for safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access and safe passage for civilians. There has been some access in recent days, but it is nowhere near enough. We call for humanitarian pauses on hostilities so food, water, medicine and other essential assistance can reach people in desperate need and so civilians can get to safety. And we note that many of our closest partners have now made similar calls.

The way Israel exercises its right to defend itself matters. It matters to civilians throughout the region and it matters to Israel's ongoing security. Innocent Palestinian civilians should not suffer because of the outrages perpetrated by Hamas. The hopes for peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians will recede even further if today's generations are motivated by grief and resentment resulting from this crisis. This is one of Hamas's objectives. We cannot let them succeed. Rather, the international community must work together to chart a path out of this crisis towards a political process.

That political process must end in a just and enduring peace in the form of a two-state solution, where Israelis and Palestinians can live securely behind internationally recognised borders. These will need to see all sides respect the right of the other to exist, and it must see the removal of the terrorist group Hamas. It must deliver the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians for statehood. Advancing the cause for peace, as always, requires leadership, understanding and courage. These are, of course, among the many critical discussions the Prime Minister is having with President Biden in Washington this week.

Understandably, the situation in the Middle East is the focus of much of the public discussion of Australia's international relations at the moment. But the broader effort also continues in advancing our interests in shaping a region which is stable, peaceful and prosperous, that is respectful of sovereignty and I look forward to discussing how the Albanese government is advancing those interests with the committee today. Thank you, Chair.

s22

s22

Senator Wong: Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the committee. I want to begin by briefly updating senators on our international engagements. The committee will be familiar with my travel as Foreign Minister, visiting some 37 countries, including nine more than once. In the first half of this year, we are focused on bringing the world to Australia. We've already had visits by foreign and defence ministers of New Zealand and, last week, we had the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea address the Australian parliament. Over the weekend in Perth, I hosted the Indian Ocean Conference, attended by the President of Sri Lanka and ministers from Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Japan, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nepal, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Tonga, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and Vietnam. And, of course, next month the Prime Minister hosts Southeast Asian leaders at the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in Melbourne. Speaking of Southeast Asia, I wish to congratulate Indonesia on the successful conduct of its election yesterday. Obviously, the formal count is continuing, but early results indicate that Prabowo Subianto is well ahead. Whoever the Indonesian people have chosen, we look forward to working closely with the next president when he is inaugurated in October. As Prime Minister Albanese has said, there is no more important relationship than the relationship between our two great nations.

Colleagues, last week we were all appalled and outraged by the suspended death sentence received by Australian citizen Dr Yang Jun in Beijing. The Australian government has conveyed our objections to the Chinese government at senior levels. All Australians want to see Dr Yang reunited with his family. We will continue with and persist in our advocacy and, through the dialogue that we have rebuilt, we will pursue the full range of Australia's national interests in our engagement with China.

Turning now to the Middle East, what I would say to the committee is that my recent travel to the Middle East reinforced that Australia is a respected voice, even if we are not a central player, in that region, and the government is using Australia's voice to advocate for a pathway out of this conflict and an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. We want to see the release of hostages, the upholding of international law and the protection of civilians. Senators, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza is dire and it is getting worse. The linchpin of humanitarian support there is UNRWA; it does lifesaving work. However, the recent allegations against UNRWA staff are serious and cannot be ignored. UNRWA's lifesaving work is why Australian governments of both stripes have provided funding to it since 1951. Right now, nearly 1.7 million Palestinians are sheltering in UNRWA facilities and thousands of its staff are involved in the humanitarian response in Gaza. The need for this critical work to continue is why Australia welcomed UNRWA's swift response to recent allegations, including terminating staff and launching an investigation and a broader independent review.

Australia is now working with a number of other major contributors to make clear to UNRWA that it needs to demonstrate strong, transparent and accountable leadership for the international community to move forward together. While this work is being done, Australia and 14 other countries, including Canada, Japan, the Netherlands and Sweden are temporarily pausing funding. For Australia, this means that the recently announced \$6 million in additional funding for UNRWA has been temporarily paused. I want to emphasise that this does not affect the annual core funding of \$20.6 million, core funding which was doubled by this government and which has already been provided for this financial year.

Since the beginning of this conflict, Australia has committed \$46.5 million in humanitarian assistance; this full amount will be delivered. Finally, I wish to restate the Australian government's grave concerns about an impending major Israeli ground offensive in Rafah. This would bring further devastation to more than a million civilians seeking shelter in Rafah, many there by Israel's direction. For there to be large-scale military operations in densely populated areas risks extensive civilian casualties; Australia believes that this would be unjustifiable. Our message to Israel is: listen to the world; do not go down this path.

s22

Speech to the ANU National Security College “Securing our Future”

Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Speech (check against delivery)

09 April 2024

Thank you, Vice Chancellor Bell, for hosting us this evening, and to Chelsea our MC. Rory, thank you for your introduction.

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would like to acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues, including the Treasurer Jim Chalmers, Attorney General Mark Dreyfus and Shadow Defence Minister Andrew Hastie.

I would also like to acknowledge the senior public servants and members of the defence force here this evening. I thank you for your service.

And the members of the diplomatic corps - thank you all for being here.

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

Our people have an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

A pluralist nation, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia’s connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, through travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our rich heritage: drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and from more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset. It gives us perspective, wisdom and experience that we now apply in securing our future in the Indo-Pacific.

We know our choices can make a difference in the world and what happens in the world makes a difference to us.

We know the costs of war, and the value of peace.

We want to maintain peace.

And we want a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and to disagree.

We want each country – large or small – to operate by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed according to the rules, and by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, and by contributing our efforts to the balance of power in our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by responding, when we, or our neighbours, are coerced or have sovereignty threatened.

We do this by combining reassurance and deterrence – by working with our friends and partners, openly and transparently, so no potential aggressor thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the Security Council's Panel of Experts on the DPRK after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, conducting illegal arms transfers to Russia and threatening our region, including our friends in the Republic of Korea and Japan.

The political, humanitarian and security situation in Myanmar continues to worsen, with far-reaching implications for our region and its people, including the Rohingya.

China's vessels are using water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew in the South China Sea.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at risk.

In December, ASEAN Foreign Ministers spoke about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their concern over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

The existing system of rules and norms is under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not evolved in turn.

The inability to reach agreement in so many fora means that a collective approach to counter grey zone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

And all together, these factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades – with a higher degree of risk that miscalculation could lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today.

I've mentioned Ukraine, whose people continue to heroically fight for their homeland against Russia's flagrant breach of the UN Charter.

Australia is resolute in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

And we are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

On October 7, Israel was brutally attacked by Hamas.

The greatest loss of Jewish life in a single day since the Holocaust.

Hamas killed 1,200 people, including Australian grandmother Galit Carbone - and continues to hold 134 hostages.

Australia remains steadfast in our call for the immediate and unconditional release of remaining hostages – families of whom I have met both in Israel and Australia.

Any country under attack by Hamas would defend itself.

And in defending itself, every country is bound by the same fundamental rules.

Israel must comply with international humanitarian law.

It must make major and immediate changes to the conduct of its military campaign, to protect civilians, journalists and aid workers.

It must comply with the binding orders of the International Court of Justice, including to enable the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance at scale.

Six months on from October 7, well over one million Palestinians in Gaza are at risk of starvation.

More than 33,000 Palestinians have been killed, including many thousands of women and children.

196 aid workers have been killed, including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

Hamas is a terrorist organisation. It is proscribed as such in Australia. It has no respect for international law.

Democracies seek and accept higher standards.

This is why Australia and so many countries have called on the Netanyahu Government to change course, including in respect of a major ground offensive in Rafah. Again we say, do not go down this path.

When President Biden cautions that Mr Netanyahu "is hurting Israel more than helping"...

And when Senator Schumer expresses concern that "Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world"...

It is in Israel's own interest that the Netanyahu Government responds to the demands of the international community.

Anyone who considers themselves a friend of Israel should be making that point.

In addition to our demand on all parties for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, enabling the release of hostages, the protection of civilians, and safe and unimpeded humanitarian access...

We need to build the pathway out of the endless cycle of violence.

We need to build the pathway to a peace that is enduring, and just.

Because the simple truth is that a secure and prosperous future for both Israelis and Palestinians will only come with a two-state solution. Recognition of each other's right to exist. A Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

We are now thirty years on from the Oslo Accords that put Palestinian statehood at the end of a process.

The failures of this approach by all parties over decades - as well as the Netanyahu Government's refusal to even engage on the question of a Palestinian state - have caused widespread frustration.

So the international community is now considering the question of Palestinian statehood as a way of building momentum towards a two-state solution.

As British Foreign Secretary Cameron has said the UK "will look at the issue of recognising a Palestinian state, including at the United Nations". He said this could make the two-state solution "irreversible".

There are always those who claim recognition is rewarding an enemy.

This is wrong.

First, because Israel's own security depends on a two-state solution.

There is no long-term security for Israel unless it is recognised by the countries of its region.

But the normalisation agenda that was being pursued before October 7 cannot proceed without progress on Palestinian statehood.

Saudi Arabia has made clear "there will be no diplomatic relations with Israel unless an independent Palestinian state is recognized".

Second, because there is no role for Hamas in a future Palestinian state. Hamas is a terrorist organisation which has the explicit intent of the destruction of the state of Israel and the Jewish people.

And it should be acknowledged that Hamas also rains terror on the Palestinian people in Gaza.

It has long been understood that any future Palestinian state cannot be in a position to threaten Israel's security and will need a reformed Palestinian Authority.

Recognising a Palestinian state – one that can only exist side by side with a secure Israel – doesn't just offer the Palestinian people an opportunity to realise their aspirations.

It also strengthens the forces for peace and undermines extremism. It undermines Hamas, Iran and Iran's other destructive proxies in the region.

A two-state solution is the only hope of breaking the endless cycle of violence.

This is why we are urging all parties to return to the table, and why we are engaging to support all efforts to advance a political process, including discussions between regional leaders.

Australia's diplomacy and decisions are focused on helping advance this lasting peace – which is what we have always said we would do.

There is a need to acknowledge the real trauma on all sides, to acknowledge each other's humanity, and to come together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

That is also the approach I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

It is disheartening to witness the number of Australians that increasingly struggle to discuss this conflict without condemning their fellow citizens.

This imperils our democracy. We have to keep listening to each other; respecting each other.

But I have heard language demonstrating that people are losing respect for each other's humanity.

Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

I've heard people who claim to represent one perspective, diminishing the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

And it's not ok to excuse egregious acts, just because they're done by people whose views you share.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by shouting each other down and by insisting on respective absolutes.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other and our right to live in peace.

Yet there are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

The Greens political party is willing to purposely amplify disinformation, exploiting distress in a blatant and cynical play for votes. With no regard for the social disharmony they are fuelling.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

At the same time, Mr Dutton reflexively dismisses concern for Palestinians as " Hamas sympathising."

On this, and in his approach to the world, Mr Dutton needs to decide if he wants to be a leader in difficult times - or if he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

Australians know our country needs mature leadership for serious times.

The Albanese Government is meeting the challenges Australia faces in our region and the world, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

Because this is the only way to advance Australia's interests in shaping a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous.

A region free of hegemony.

A region in balance.

Where countries, large and small, have the freedom to decide our own futures.

Where we operate by the same rules, and we have space to agree and to disagree.

Securing our region today requires modernising the legacies of Curtin, Whitlam and Evatt, prioritising alliance, region and rules.

Starting with the alliance, which has only grown in strength and depth in the past two years.

The United States is our closest ally, our principal strategic partner and our largest source of foreign investment.

We share values and ideals, and our alliance is underpinned by mutual respect for each others' sovereignty and national interests.

The Indo-Pacific would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States and its security guarantee to the region.

As I have said before, American leadership remains indispensable – it is the great builder of alliances and networks, essential for balance in a multipolar region.

I know that will be the case in the future, as it has been for many decades past. We will continue to work closely with whoever is elected by the American people as US President.

But US leadership does not abrogate our own responsibility. We know we cannot expect the US to secure our future for us.

Which brings me to my next priority – the region we live in.

We take forward the Labor tradition of a defence and foreign policy anchored Asia and the Pacific.

Since day one of this government, we have been investing in our region and our relationships, to build our collective resilience and sovereignty.

This year alone we have hosted the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in March.

Through the Melbourne Declaration, ASEAN and Australia's leaders reaffirmed ASEAN's centrality in fostering peace and enhancing mutual trust among countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

We are building shared prosperity with Southeast Asia, including through Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040.

Our Quad partnership with India, Japan and the United States is listening and responding to the priorities of regional partners, while respecting the enduring leadership of ASEAN, the Indian Ocean Rim Association, and the Pacific Islands Forum.

And Australia is investing more than ever in the Pacific.

Guided by the needs of our Pacific partners and the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia is boosting our support for sport, climate finance, policing and maritime cooperation.

The Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union embodies our approach to partnership.

It is the biggest step Australia has taken with a Pacific country since the independence of Papua New Guinea nearly 50 years ago.

We have released Australia's first international development policy in almost a decade and are rebuilding our development and humanitarian programs.

Through these and other investments, we are working to help our partners become more economically resilient, develop critical infrastructure and provide their own security, so they have less need to call on others.

We recognise we live in a more contested region, and we have to work harder to be a trusted partner of choice. The opportunity to be the only partner of choice in the Pacific was lost to us over the previous decade.

Being a partner of choice relies on being mature and credible.

Stabilising our relationship with China has not only helped rebuild our credibility with our regional partners, but it has also enabled Australia to speak directly to China's leadership.

Our efforts so far have seen impediments lifted on over \$19 billion of Australian exports, and we continue to press for outstanding impediments on around \$1 billion of exports to be resolved.

We are taking forward regular leader-level and ministerial engagement with China.

Some imply that there is something to be gained in limiting contact with China.

The reality is that China is the world's second largest economy, representing 17% of the world's GDP. China's growth story has been a crucial driver of prosperity in Australia, in our region and in the world.

China's size and weight makes it central to global challenges, from climate change to health. As a great power, China will continue to assert itself in reshaping the region and the world.

Advancing our interests requires engagement, and contrary to what some suggest, engagement does not imply concession.

It is worrying that large-scale Chinese military operations in the Taiwan Strait have become a routine event. The risk of an accident, and potential escalation, is growing.

Australia's longstanding and bipartisan position is to oppose unilateral changes to the status quo. We call for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues through dialogue without the threat or use of force or coercion.

Some may say this is insufficient in the circumstances that we face. But I would invite reflection on the alternative.

Australia is always working for peace. And for us, our third priority, is upholding and strengthening the rules that work to prevent conflict.

Since I became Foreign Minister, I have consistently called for open lines of communication between the great powers.

We welcome the resumption of leader-level and military-level dialogue between the United States and China as important steps on the path towards stability that the region has called for.

This is also a reminder of the role militaries must play in reassurance, as well as deterrence.

The circumstances we face only reinforce the need for militaries to be in contact.

And that the need for new preventive architecture and conflict prevention measures has only grown, to increase resilience and promote transparency and reassurance.

As military capabilities grow, we know that a level of transparency is expected from our region and our partners – just as we expect transparency of others.

This is how our government has sought to engage our partners at every step of the AUKUS agreement with the United States and the United Kingdom.

Today we announced that AUKUS partners are considering cooperation with Japan on AUKUS Pillar II advanced capability projects.

We are committed to AUKUS meeting the highest nuclear non-proliferation standards.

The IAEA DG Grossi has welcomed our continued openness and transparency. We look forward to our co-presidency of the IAEA's International Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna next month.

The Albanese Government is progressing the proud Labor commitment to a world without nuclear weapons.

Just as we carry forward the Labor commitment to international organisations, seeking to reform them for today's challenges and recognising that many developing countries are inadequately served by too much of the international system.

We want everyone to have a voice.

Because Australia knows that international rules and norms deter conflict and underpin our security and prosperity.

All of our efforts – through the alliance, region and rules – are for the ultimate goal: to avert conflict, build prosperity and sustain the kind of peace we want.

Our efforts provide reassurance to persuade all countries that their interests are best served by peace, and deterrence, to ensure that the costs of aggression continue to outweigh the benefits.

Often, security discourses have artificially divided actions to reassure and to deter.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that thinking limits our potency when we have to maximise all the tools of national power.

As recognised in the Defence Strategic Review, credible deterrence requires using all levers of statecraft to create an unacceptably high cost for any potential adversary.

The logic of the post-war economic order was to enable development and growth through openness.

And today, as then, economic integration provides a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

Economic interdependence can, as we know, also be misused for strategic and political ends.

And this is one-way rules play an important role in deterrence – in this case international trade rules, which also create a level playing field.

That's why multilateral engagement in international organisations like the UN is a core national interest, too often dismissed by some.

These organisations are where nations come together to decide the rules and defend the peace. As the saying goes, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

I want to make this point about diplomacy – which in these forums and elsewhere, builds coalitions, reduces tensions, negotiates agreements and resolves disputes.

Diplomacy frames the calculus that each country faces.

Diplomacy signals intent, credibility and even red lines.

The new concept of National Defence, underpinning the inaugural National Defence Strategy, comprehends that as we seek to maintain peace in our region, our nation's front line is diplomacy.

And our diplomacy is underwritten by our military capability.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles made this point last week: that deterring conflict in today's environment requires a new approach – one that harnesses all elements of our national power.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs for those who would seek to coerce us.

Indeed, in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into diplomacy and engagement, the risk of military capabilities being called upon for conflict increases.

As international trends continue to go in the wrong direction, Australia's coordination of our military, diplomatic, strategic and economic power...

Our ability to reassure partners and to deter threats...

Becomes ever more important.

Our region is being reshaped.

And Australians know our choices and actions matter.

So, we work with partners and friends to shape the region in our interests – contributing to the region's balance of power, so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We seek to be the credible and mature partner we expect other countries to be.

And I end where I began. Australians have always been connected to the world.

Through this connection we know what it is about Australia we need to project and what we need to protect.

A pluralist nation, welcoming, respectful, celebrating each other's rights and freedoms.

This is the nation whose future we seek to secure.

Speech to the Senate - Hamas attacks on Israel - Senate motion, Parliament House

Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Speech (check against delivery)

16 October 2023

President -

The Senate must condemn these acts of evil perpetrated by a hateful group bent on the destruction of the State of Israel and the eradication of Jews.

This was an assault on Israel, on the Jewish people.

But also an attack on our collective humanity.

We unequivocally condemn these attacks, and we call for the immediate release of hostages.

Australia stands with Israel, and always will.

Just as we always remember the thousands of years of persecution and atrocities perpetrated against the Jewish people...

The six million European Jews killed in the Holocaust...

That finally resolved the international community to establish the state of Israel.

And as more Jews were killed in this attack than on any single day since the Holocaust, we understand how it brings back that trauma.

The attack by Hamas was shocking in its brutality and its scale.

1,400 civilians murdered, 3,500 injured.

As many as 150 taken from Israel and held hostage in Gaza.

Men, women and children. From babies to the infirm and elderly. Holocaust survivors.

Many killed in their homes, protecting their loved ones.

Hundreds gunned down at a music festival.

Citizens from more than thirty nations, an Australian grandmother, Galit Carbone, among their number.

Place names that days ago were known to only a few, now seared in our memory.

Kibbutz Be'eri.

Kibbutz Kafar Aza.

Small, self-sustaining communities that have experienced unimaginable horror.

I again express my deepest sympathies to those impacted by these heinous acts.

We are shocked. We are horrified.

We grieve with you and we affirm our solidarity with you.

We need to be clear about what has taken place here.

Hamas has carried out a terrorist attack against Israel and its people.

There is no justification for this attack.

And in the face of this attack, as ever, Israel has a right to defend itself.

To re-establish its security.

To prevent such attacks from taking place again.

We must also be clear that Hamas does not seek peace.

Nor does Hamas represent or speak for the Palestinian people and their legitimate needs and aspirations.

We need to be clear in differentiating Hamas from the Palestinian people, just as we would distinguish between the Taliban and Afghans.

Hamas is a terrorist group that rules Gaza with no regard for the safety and security of the Palestinian people who live there.

The Albanese Government's guiding principle has always been the pursuit of peace and progress toward a just and enduring two-state solution where Israelis and Palestinians can live within secure borders.

One of the many tragic consequences of Hamas's abhorrent attack is that it has pushed that two-state solution further out of reach.

That also makes this an unconscionable crime perpetrated by Hamas against the Palestinian people.

Hamas's actions have precipitated a devastating situation in Israel and Gaza.

Civilians on all sides are suffering.

Regardless of religion or ethnicity, we mourn each innocent life lost.

Australia's principled position in all contexts is to call for the protection of civilian lives and the observation of international humanitarian law.

These are principles Australians cherish.

They protect us all, which is why we have seen such widespread calls across the international community for the protection of civilians.

And they are principles I have consistently advocated in my discussions with regional and international partners including Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the UAE, the Palestinian Authority and the US.

We join the calls of US President Biden and other partners for Israel to operate by the rules of war.

These calls are about protecting innocent life, but they are also about our shared interests.

They are about containing this conflict.

And containing this conflict matters.

If conflict were to spill over across the region, risks to Israel's security would be compounded - as they would for Israeli and Palestinian civilians, and civilian populations throughout the region.

Averting regional escalation matters to Israel, the people of the region and to the world.

This will be one of Israel's many considerations as it determines how it pursues its legitimate military objectives.

We recognise this will be challenging.

Hamas has burrowed itself in Gaza's civilian population.

It uses the Palestinian people and the hostages it has taken as human shields, and seeks to prevent the departure of foreign nationals.

Inhumane tactics that clarify the true nature of the group, but in turn heighten the imperative for all possible measures to be taken to protect civilians in Gaza.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is deteriorating rapidly.

In response, Australia is providing an initial \$10 million in humanitarian assistance through trusted partners for civilians affected by the conflict in Gaza.

This includes \$3 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross to fund urgent needs like restoring essential services and providing medical support to victims of the conflict.

And \$7 million through UNICEF and UNOPS to deliver critical support including emergency water, nutrition, sanitation and hygiene services, as well as child protection.

To ensure essential humanitarian relief can reach civilians affected by the conflict in Gaza, we call for safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to Gaza and the rapid establishment of a humanitarian corridor.

We support the work of the United States, Egypt and others towards this goal.

Australia will continue to monitor and assess the humanitarian situation and stands ready to provide further support.

From the outset of this crisis, the Australian Government has been supporting Australians in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank.

Last Monday, I directed the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to assess all options for Australians wanting to leave.

We secured commercial options for assisted departures and readied the ADF to assist should commercial options no longer be viable.

The first of those flights, operated by Qantas, took 238 passengers from Tel Aviv to London free of charge.

Overnight we provided a further three flights – two operated by the ADF and one government charter.

In many cases, we have also been able to coordinate with countries who are facing similar circumstances – for example Fiji, which happened to have a plane in Israel and provided thirteen seats to Australians wanting to leave.

I want to thank everyone who has helped in this effort.

The officials in my department including at our overseas posts, officials in the Department of Defence, personnel in the Australian Defence Force, and staff at Services Australia.

I also acknowledge the work of other departments and agencies through what has been a whole of government response.

I should note that we have secured flights for onward travel to Australia from London and Dubai.

Information about those flights will be provided directly to passengers and further details will be released soon.

Subject to factors including the security environment, the Australian Government is planning an additional charter flight to depart from Tel Aviv to Dubai today, for Australians wanting to leave.

Yesterday we saw spare seats despite them being fully allocated.

We can't know how the security situation will unfold.

As I have been saying for several days, people who want to leave should take the first available option.

People should consider this might be our last opportunity to conduct an assisted departure flight for the foreseeable future.

As of this morning, more than 1,200 Australians previously registered have left Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including more than 400 Australians and their families on four Australian Government assisted-departure flights.

DFAT continues to assist more than 1,000 registered Australians, including 39 consular cases.

I emphasise that not all of those registered want to leave – in many cases it is a matter of maintaining contact and the flow of information at what is obviously an anxious time.

The situation is highly challenging and rapidly changing. The Australian Government is considering whether further assisted-departure flights are required.

Australians in the affected areas who want to leave and need assistance with departure should register via DFAT's Crisis Portal or by calling the 24-hour Consular Emergency Centre on +61 2 6261 3305 (from overseas) or 1300 555 135 (from within Australia).

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will continue to provide updates to registered Australians.

President, in closing I want to reflect on the impact of this conflict here in Australia.

Australians are rightly distressed by this situation, and the distress is felt most acutely in our Jewish and Palestinian communities.

There is a long, complex and disputed history - deeply felt, close to the heart of many.

The lived experiences and understandings of our different Australian communities are distinct.

When individuals engage in the sort of rhetoric that we have seen in recent days - the vile antisemitism, and the Islamophobia which is its bedfellow - it undermines some of our greatest strengths – our diversity, our tolerance, and our values.

This weekend, President Biden reminded us that history teaches that “hate toward one group left unanswered leaves open the door for more hate for more groups.”

And so I ask that when we speak, we speak with respect and understanding for difference.

We should reject all in this country who seek to create division, where we should be striving for unity.

That we reject hate and condemn prejudice and discrimination in all its forms.

That we reject the terror perpetrated by Hamas and separate their heinous acts from the legitimate needs and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

That we stand firm against antisemitism, we stand against Islamophobia, we stand against prejudice and hate speech in all its forms - and we call it out when and where we see it.

We must maintain mutual respect for each other here at home – we must preserve our uniquely harmonious multicultural character.

It is why people come to this country.

It is who we are as a country.

s22

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

[09:06]

CHAIR: On that notice, today's proceedings will commence with representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in the non-trade programs. I welcome Senator the Hon. Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs. Good morning.

Senator Wong: Good morning.

CHAIR: I also welcome Ms Jan Adams, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Good morning.

Ms Adams: Good morning.

CHAIR: Do either of you have an opening statement you would like to make?

Senator Wong: I do. Can I start by remembering former senator Linda White. She was a woman of incisive intellect and deep principle, and we miss her.

I begin today by, again, conveying Australia's deepest condolences to the government and the people of Papua New Guinea. Our countries are the closest of neighbours and the best of friends. Australia remains at the ready to add to our initial response of \$2.5 million in humanitarian assistance, including emergency relief supplies, logistical support from the ADF and expertise on geohazards to inform early recovery efforts.

Since the last estimates, Australia has hosted a number of international guests. We've had leaders from across South-East Asia for the ASEAN Australia Special Summit, and we were grateful that all leaders from the ASEAN region were gracious enough to attend the summit. We hosted the foreign and defence ministers of Japan, the foreign and defence secretaries of the United Kingdom and the foreign and defence ministers of the Republic of Korea. I've also hosted the foreign minister of Germany. In addition, I have visited Bangladesh, including Cox's Bazaar, and Singapore. In Tuvalu we took forward our shared vision for the Falepili Union, on a bipartisan visit with Senator Birmingham, and I thank him for his engagement.

All of these engagements have been grounded in fundamental, strategic and diplomatic priorities for Australia. At a time of increasing global uncertainty, facing conflict in Europe and the Middle East and with the risk of conflict closer to home, we must do everything we can to preserve peace. We want a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures without interference. We want each country, whether large or small, to operate by the same laws, and, when disputes inevitably arise, which they will, we want them managed according to the rules by talking and co-operation, not by force, threat of force or raw power.

Of course, this does not happen on its own; we have to help make it happen, including by upholding international law, whether it be the law of the sea or humanitarian law. We do nothing to help make it happen by recklessly threatening to pull out of the bodies that uphold international law. That kind of talk may seem tough to some, but it undermines Australia's core security interests. For example, we cannot insist that China abide by international legal decisions in the South China Sea but threaten to pull out of the International Criminal Court. We do nothing to shape the kind of region Australia needs by picking fights, blowing up relationships or beating the drums of war. We do help make it happen by rebuilding and stabilising relationships with mature, calm, consistent engagement. That is the priority of this government.

By combining all the elements of our national power we can advance Australia's interests in the world. The new concept of national defence underpinning the inaugural National Defence Strategy comprehends that, as we seek to maintain peace in our region, our nation's front line is diplomacy; it is the men and women behind me and those who operate in our posts across the world. They and their work are underwritten by our military capability. Diplomacy frames the calculus that each country faces. It signals intent; it signals credibility and even red lines. The secretary can provide more detail on the work we have done to strengthen, for example, the diplomatic network.

Senators, as tensions increase around the world, it is a time for our political leaders to work together to protect our nation's character. We are a pluralist nation. We welcome different races, religions and views. We are united by respect for one another's humanity and for each other's right to live in peace. All of us, everyone here, has a high responsibility to protect that. There are too many who are prepared to exploit differences in our community for political advantage, spreading false information in an attempt to incite conflict here to reproduce the conflict here. Remember, our actions do have consequences.

I have previously said it is not okay for anyone, much less someone who claims to be a leader, to blame people in Australia for what is happening overseas. We all understand that the situation in Gaza is catastrophic. What we have seen in Rafah underlines why Australia and the international community have been united in opposition. The death and destruction is horrific, and this human suffering is unacceptable. We reiterate to the Netanyahu government this cannot continue. We must see an immediate humanitarian ceasefire so that civilians can be protected. Hamas must release hostages, and Israel must allow aid to flow at scale, as directed by the ICJ. So we welcome the current ceasefire proposal from President Biden and I publicly urge parties to agree to its terms. Thank you.

s22

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

Themes:

- *us (serious, responsible, measured, credentialed) vs them (wrecking ball, [thug], failed)*
- *all arms of statecraft, focus on broadening deterrence*
- *focusing ME discussion – international/domestic*

INTRODUCTION

Thank you (Rory) for your introduction and to ... for [acknowledgement of country].

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the impediments we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

With an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

Pluralist, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today we are connected to the world through who we are.

Connected by our curious and intrepid personality, expressed in travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our national heritage. Half of us were born overseas, or have at least one parent born overseas. Australians are drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and families of more than 300 ancestries.

We now focus the wisdom and experience of this rich heritage from all reaches of the Earth firmly on a future in the Indo-Pacific.

That experience teaches us that our choices make a difference in the world, and what happens in the world makes a difference to us.

We have a long history of contributing to peace and prosperity, supported by strong institutions and a stable region.

And we know the costs of war, and the value of peace.

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

So we want to maintain peace – but a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and disagree.

Where each country – large or small – operates by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, working with other countries to build a balanced region – where no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by working with our friends and partners to combine reassurance and deterrence, so no country thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case in every setting where our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there **were** already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

Longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Big players are intimidating smaller ones, with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrating what's at stake in standing up to aggressors.

We have called on China to use its influence on Russia to end the war.

China's economic power, rapid military expansion and assertive pursuit of its interests are changing dynamics in the Indo-Pacific.

Moreover, the competition between China and the United States is becoming entrenched.

Increasing tension between the great powers is already eroding the stability and security our region needs.

Our region would not have enjoyed its long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States guaranteeing the region's security and support for rules and institutions.

These institutions are under strain by those that seek to elevate some rights over others and present an alternative.

They are also threatened by the evolving nature of the challenges we face.

The existing system is not necessarily well suited to counter the grayzone nature of unsafe and risky interactions that we see in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait.

This is causing a higher degree of uncertainty and risks of miscalculation.

Left to drift, that sort of unpredictability would threaten the region's economy – or worse, could invite miscalculation and lead to catastrophic conflict.

[this is why – preventive architecture]

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today. I've mentioned Ukraine, whose people continue the fight for their homeland with the support of many friends, including Australia which has contributed xxx.

But I do want to spend some time this evening on the conflict in the Middle East.

Extended treatment of Middle East – 1000 words approx

There remains real danger that that conflict will spread further through the region, with potential consequences so destructive they are impossible to overstate.

But already the situation in Gaza is catastrophic.

Israel rightly had the world's sympathy and concern in the wake of the October 7 attacks by Hamas, when more Jews died on a single day than on any day since the Holocaust.

Now, through the conduct of its response to that attack, the Netanyahu Government has left Israel more isolated than at any time in its history.

More than 650,000 Palestinians are starving.

More than 32,000 civilians and more than 190 aid workers have been killed.

Including Australian Zomi Frakcom.

Add up to date points on Zomi on Monday.

The deaths of Zomi and her British, American, Polish and Palestinian colleagues cannot be in vain, and cannot be rationalised away as the cost of defending Israel's interests.

Because failure to listen to the international community - failure to comply with international humanitarian law - is directly counter to Israel's interests, and true friends of Israel do it no favours by denying reality.

There is good reason for President Biden to remark that Prime Minister Netanyahu is hurting Israel more than helping it.

Chuck Schumer has put it in even starker terms.

Senator Schumer is the Senate Majority Leader in the United States: the highest-ranking Jewish-American ever elected. He is also one of the most pro-Israel politicians in America.

In a recent speech that cannot be ignored, Senator Schumer warned that:

Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world.

Unless the Netanyahu Government changes course and complies with the demands of the international community, Israel will continue to lose support.

Two weeks ago, the world finally got to the point where none of the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council exercised a veto on a resolution about the conflict in Gaza. Not the United States, nor Russia, nor China – all of whom had vetoed previous resolutions.

Not one country voted against the resolution.

That resolution came more than 100 days after Australia voted with 152 other countries in the General Assembly for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

And we continue to partner with likeminded countries, like Canada and New Zealand, using our voice to advocate for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire that leads to a sustainable ceasefire.

We continue to use our voice to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

And we continue to use our voice to advocate for a peace that is just and enduring.

Tonight I want to explain what that means.

We cannot be a friend of Israelis without also being a friend of Palestinians, and we cannot be a friend of Palestinians without also being a friend of Israelis.

Their destinies are tied.

A long and painful history has led to an unavoidable truth: Israelis and Palestinians cannot secure their futures without each other.

That may sound improbable, given the current conflict and all the conflicts that have preceded it.

Extremists at each end of this conflict argue for their own people to completely control the land “from the river to the sea” – pushing the other into oblivion.

But both peoples have legitimate and longstanding claims to [these/their] lands.

There is no prospect of security for either unless there is security for both.

The obvious evidence for this on the Israeli side of the equation is that it wants nothing more than normalised relations with its neighbours. Its ongoing security relies on it. But it will never happen without an independent Palestinian state.

And there is no scenario for a Palestinian state that is not alongside the state of Israel.

This two-solution doesn't guarantee that there will be no more conflict, but a cycle of conflict – where each sees the other as the aggressor – is guaranteed without it.

There are efforts underway at a grand bargain, bringing these interests together.

And it appears likely that the UN Security Council will be considering full Palestinian membership of the United Nations.

Prime Minister Netanyahu's opposition to Palestinian statehood comes at the cost of Israel's own security and its reputation.

Whether you're a friend of Israelis, a friend of Palestinians, or a friend of both, as I am, we must keep making this undeniable point: Peace requires all sides to respect the right of others to exist.

CHALLENGES AT HOME – 700 WORDS

Social cohesion

That is the principle I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other.

The only way to break the cycle of conflict is by coming together, as peacemakers throughout history have done. We have to acknowledge the real trauma on all sides.

Each of us knows a time when we've only been able to solve a profound problem by working with the people we blame for it.

We ought to model that here, at home, in Australia.

As I said, we are a pluralist country. we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

Like settlements, which are illegal, and undermine Israel's security by making a viable Palestinian state impossible.

hamas

LNP – legacy and future

Mr Dutton needs to decide whether he wants to be a leader in difficult times, or he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

Mr Bandt needs to decide whether he wants to make a responsible contribution to Australian society, or risk being responsible if, God forbid, his party's reckless incitement of anger leads to somebody getting hurt.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT – 1200 WORDS

Achieving balance in our region will require a response of unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

A balance where deterrence ensures that the costs of aggression outweigh the benefits; and where reassurance persuades all parties that their interests are best served by peace.

We change the calculus for any potential aggressor by demonstrating these costs through all tools of national power.

This is not a job only for the military, or for our diplomats.

Any lever that creates an unacceptably high cost can serve as a deterrent – whether that is in the multilateral space through international rules and norms or in trade and

investment through the benefits of interdependence, and the inevitable costs of disruption.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they raise the costs of those that would seek to coerce us.

All of these spheres have a role to play in deterrence, yet conversely, we have an opportunity, or even an obligation, in each arena to reassure.

States need to make clear through their actions, not just their words, that they are committed to peaceful resolution of disputes and to upholding the rules and norms.

The Albanese Government is investing in our statecraft, deploying these tools for deterrence and reassurance, to make Australia more stable, confident and secure at home, and more influential in the world.

These tools are mutually reinforcing – without credible military capability, the efficacy of resilience, trade links are diplomacy are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into these tools, the risk of military capabilities being called into service is greater.

Identifying and assessing these interests and these costs requires understanding the perspective of the other party at the negotiating table.

Our diplomats, who make Australia's case around the world, in foreign capitals and international organisations, are at the forefront of these efforts.

They advocate, they negotiate, they persuade – to build coalitions, reduce tensions, resolve disputes. They reassure of our intentions and remind of the incentives to avoid conflict.

This is why expanding dialogue and communication has been at the centre of our approach.

We have intensified our high-level engagement on key issues affecting our region, including hosting the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the Australia-ASEAN Special Summit in March.

We have resumed regular ministerial engagement with China.

We are strengthening partnerships with those who share our interests in sovereignty and resilience, and who are committed to bolstering agreed rules in ways that give all countries a say.

[ASEAN centrality; upgrading our partnerships with Vietnam and Philippines]

[preventive architecture]

Our diplomacy and the balance we seek to achieve is underwritten by strong defence capabilities.

[Defence force – refer to Marles speech? Our defence forces, capabilities, and working with partners investing in their own. – AUKUS, US alliance, joint sail with Phils and Japan]

And we are bolstering our intelligence capabilities to protect Australians and our interests, including through the Five Eyes, as well as to counter threats to regional stability and security.

We are rebuilding our development program to ensure Australia is a partner of choice in our region, and to better support stability, resilience and prosperity.

[Pacific]

[gender equality + climate]

And we play our part in international organisations like the United Nations, where the rules are decided and peace is defended.

We are building prosperity by opening new markets for trade and investment - while growing existing markets.

Economic integration in our region is not only important for our economy, but it also creates a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

And we are protecting and nurturing the international trade rules that create certainty and a level playing field for our business and workers.

Our statecraft provides confidence to the world about our peaceful intentions, and deters those who might seek to harm us.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

Themes:

- *us (serious, responsible, measured, credentialed) vs them (wrecking ball, [thug], failed)*
- *all arms of statecraft, focus on broadening deterrence*
- *focusing ME discussion – international/domestic*

INTRODUCTION

Thank you (Rory) for your introduction and to ... for [acknowledgement of country].

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

With an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

Pluralist, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia’s connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, expressed in travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our national heritage. Australians are drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and families of more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This rich heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset, giving us wisdom and experience that we now apply in shaping our future in the Indo-Pacific.

It is wisdom and experience of the differences our choices can make in the world, and of the difference what happens in the world can make to us.

It is wisdom and experience in contributing to peace and prosperity; in knowing the costs of war, and the value of peace.

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

So we want to maintain peace – but a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and disagree.

Where each country – large or small – operates by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, by contributing our efforts to the balance of our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by working with our friends and partners to combine reassurance and deterrence, so no country thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Big players are intimidating smaller ones,

Our region would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States guaranteeing the region's security and support for rules and institutions.

But longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the UNSC Committee Panel of Experts after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, including illegal arms transfers to Russia to aid its war effort.

Myanmar placeholder

Incursions by Chinese aircraft in the Taiwan Strait have become a daily event.

And China's vessels have used water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew near the Second Thomas Shoal.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at stake.

ASEAN Foreign Ministers in December expressed concerns about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their unease over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

And that entrenched competition between the great power is already eroding the stability and security our region needs.

Military power is expanding, but measures to constrain military conflict are not – and there are few concrete mechanisms for averting it.

The existing system of rules and norms is already under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not necessarily evolved in turn.

The inability to reach consensus in so many fora means that a unified approach to counter these grayzone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

These factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades, with a higher degree of uncertainty.

Left to drift, that sort of unpredictability would threaten the region's economy – or worse, could invite miscalculation and lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today. I've mentioned Ukraine, whose people continue the fight for their homeland with the support of many friends, including Australia which has contributed xxx.

But I do want to spend some time this evening on the conflict in the Middle East.

There remains real danger that that conflict will spread further through the region, with potential consequences so destructive they are impossible to overstate.

But already the situation in Gaza is catastrophic.

Israel rightly had the world's sympathy and concern in the wake of the October 7 attacks by Hamas, when more Jews died on a single day than on any day since the Holocaust.

Now, through the conduct of its response to that attack, the Netanyahu Government has left Israel more isolated than at any time in its history.

More than 650,000 Palestinians are starving.

More than 32,000 civilians and more than 190 aid workers have been killed.

Including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

On Monday add current points on humanitarian deaths.

The deaths of Zomi Frankcom and her British, American, Polish and Palestinian colleagues cannot be in vain, and cannot be rationalised away as the fog of war or the cost of defending Israel's interests.

Because failure to listen to the international community - failure to comply with international humanitarian law - is directly counter to Israel's interests, and true friends of Israel do it no favours by pretending otherwise.

There is good reason for President Biden to remark that Prime Minister Netanyahu is hurting Israel more than helping it.

Chuck Schumer has put it in even starker terms.

Senator Schumer is the Senate Majority Leader in the United States: the highest-ranking Jewish-American ever elected. He is also one of the most pro-Israel politicians in America.

In a comprehensive recent speech that cannot be ignored, Senator Schumer warned that:

Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world.

Unless the Netanyahu Government changes course and complies with the demands of the international community, Israel will continue to lose support.

It cannot ignore the watershed moment two weeks ago, when not one country voted against a binding ceasefire resolution at the UN Security Council.

Not one country exercised a veto. Not the United States, nor Russia, nor China – all of whom had vetoed previous resolutions.

That resolution came more than 100 days after Australia voted with 152 other countries in the General Assembly for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

We continue to partner with likeminded countries, like Canada and New Zealand, using our voice to advocate for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire that leads to a sustainable ceasefire.

We continue to use our voice to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

We continue to use our voice to advocate for a safe and unimpeded humanitarian access and the protection of civilians.

And we continue to use our voice to advocate for a peace that is just and enduring.

It's important to be clear what that means.

A long and painful history has created an unavoidable and inextricable truth: Israelis and Palestinians cannot secure their futures without each other.

Their destinies are tied.

That may sound improbable, given the current conflict and all the conflicts that have preceded it.

Extremists at each end of this conflict argue for their own people to completely control the land “from the river to the sea” – pushing the other into oblivion.

But both peoples have legitimate and longstanding claims to [these/their] lands.

There is no prospect for peace unless both parties recognise that.

There is no prospect of security for either unless there is security for both.

This means none of us can be a friend of Israelis without also being a friend of Palestinians, nor can we be a friend of Palestinians without also being a friend of Israelis.

The obvious evidence for this on the Israeli side of the equation is that it wants nothing more than normalised relations with its neighbours.

Its ongoing security relies on it. But it will never happen without an independent Palestinian state.

So Prime Minister Netanyahu's opposition to Palestinian statehood comes at the cost of Israel's own security and its reputation.

And there is no scenario for a Palestinian state that is not alongside the state of Israel, [implication/requirement for Palestinian leadership] .

A two-solution doesn't guarantee that there will be no more conflict, but a cycle of conflict – where each sees the other as the aggressor – is guaranteed without it.

There are efforts underway at a grand bargain, bringing these interests together.

And it appears likely that the UN Security Council will be considering full Palestinian membership of the United Nations.

Whether you're a friend of Israelis, a friend of Palestinians, or a friend of both, as I am, we must keep making this undeniable point: Peace requires all sides to respect the right of others to exist.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

Social cohesion

That is the principle I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by insisting on our respective absolutes.

The only way to break the cycle of conflict is by acknowledging the real trauma on all sides, and by coming together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

We ought to model that here, at home, in Australia.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other's humanity and for each other's right to live in peace.

But I have heard language in Australia showing that people here, too, are losing respect for each other's humanity.

Language that shows the conflict is being reproduced here.

People who claim to represent one perspective, seeking to diminish the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

And it's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

There are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating community concern for their own ends.

It is not leadership to exploit anxiety, distress and resentment for political benefit.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

There is apparently no limit to the lies and disinformation the Greens political party is willing to spread for cynical political purposes.

They are using these lies and disinformation to incite anger and hatred.

Mr Bandt needs to make a decision. Does he want his party to make a responsible contribution to Australian society. Or does he want to be responsible if, God forbid, his party's incitement leads to somebody getting hurt.

Mr Dutton needs to decide whether he wants to be a leader in difficult times, or he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

His instinct for conflict does no good for our social fabric, and his reflexive aggression is not what Australia needs in the world, either.

Nothing he did as a minister made Australia stronger in the world, or more able to secure our future.

Indeed, in coming to office two years ago we found Australia's standing in our region at one of its lowest points.

The government Mr Dutton helped lead projected a cartoonish parody of toughness but left Australia with fewer friends, less credibility and less trust.

The Australian people recognised that security is to be more pantomime than practice for the Liberals.

They could see more clearly than their government that Australia needed mature leadership for serious times.

And that is what we have delivered.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

Achieving balance in our region will require a serious, consistent and measured approach, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

A balance where reassurance persuades all parties that their interests are best served by peace, and where deterrence ensures that the costs of aggression outweighs the benefits.

Identifying and assessing this calculus requires understanding the perspective of the other party at the negotiating table.

Often, actions to reassure and to deter has been artificially divided.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that limits our potential. We know that our statecraft involves investing in all tools of national power.

Any lever in any domain that creates an unacceptably high cost can serve as a deterrent.

Identifying and assessing these interests and these costs requires understanding the perspective of the other party at the negotiating table.

Our diplomats, who make Australia's case around the world, in foreign capitals and international organisations, are at the forefront of these efforts.

They advocate, they negotiate, they persuade – to build coalitions, reduce tensions, resolve disputes. They reassure of our intentions and remind of the incentives to avoid conflict.

This is why expanding dialogue and communication has been at the centre of our approach.

We have intensified our high-level engagement on key issues affecting our region, including hosting the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the Australia-ASEAN Special Summit in March.

We have resumed regular ministerial engagement with China.

[ASEAN centrality; upgrading our partnerships with Vietnam and Philippines]

We are strengthening partnerships with those who are committed to bolstering agreed rules in ways that give all countries a say.

The multilateral space is key to these efforts, where the rules are decided and peace is defended.

In international organisations, we make clear the expectations of the international community and seek to impose costs on those that fall short.

[placeholder – what we are doing on nonpro/UNCLOS]

We are working to provide confidence to the world about our peaceful intentions, and to deter those who might seek to harm us.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs of those that would seek to coerce us.

Economic integration in our region is not only important for Australian prosperity, but it also creates a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

The benefits of economic interdependence carry with them the inevitable costs of potential disruption.

Australia is working for a diversified, resilient economy, opening new markets for trade and investment, while growing existing markets.

And we are protecting and nurturing the international trade rules that create certainty and a level playing field for our business and workers.

The balance we seek to achieve is underwritten by strong defence capabilities.

[Defence force – refer to Marles speech? Our defence forces, capabilities, and working with partners investing in their own. – AUKUS, US alliance, joint sail with Phils and Japan]

And while defence is traditionally seen as an exercise in deterrence, I have consistently spoken of the need for open lines of communication to provide reassurance.

Joint exercises, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and military to military dialogue are all fundamental to keeping the peace.

[mil-mil dialogue, US/China, preventive architecture]

Indeed in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into statecraft, the risk of military capabilities being called into service is greater.

In all of these spheres, states have an opportunity – or even an obligation - to make clear through their actions, not just their words, that they are committed to peaceful resolution of disputes and to upholding the rules and norms.

To working together to build sovereignty and resilience, always in the pursuit of peace, stability and prosperity.

Australia is rebuilding our development program to ensure Australia is a partner of choice in our region, and because our neighbours' success is our success.

[Pacific]

[gender equality + climate as levers for prosperity and peace]

The Albanese Government is investing in our statecraft, deploying these tools for deterrence and reassurance, to make Australia more stable, confident and secure at home, and more influential in the world.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

Themes/Issues:

- *us (serious, responsible, measured, credentialed) vs them (wrecking ball, [thug], failed)*
- *all arms of statecraft, focus on broadening deterrence*
- *comprehensive ME discussion – international/domestic*

INTRODUCTION

Thank you (Rory) for your introduction and to ... for [acknowledgement of country].

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

With an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

A pluralist nation, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia’s connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, expressed in travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our national heritage: drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and families of more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This rich heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset, giving us perspective, wisdom and experience that we now apply in shaping our future in the Indo-Pacific.

It is wisdom and experience of the differences our choices can make in the world, and how what happens in the world can make a difference to us.

It is wisdom and experience in contributing to stability and prosperity; in knowing the costs of war, and the value of peace.

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

So we want to maintain peace – but a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and disagree.

We want each country – large or small – to operate by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, by contributing our efforts the balance of our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by working with our friends and partners to combine reassurance and deterrence, so no potential aggressor thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Big players are intimidating smaller ones.

[bridging line]

Our region would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States guaranteeing the region's security and support for rules and institutions.

But longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the UNSC Committee Panel of Experts after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, including illegal arms transfers to Russia to aid its war effort.

Myanmar placeholder

Incursions by Chinese aircraft in the Taiwan Strait have become a daily event.

And China's vessels have used water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew near the Second Thomas Shoal.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at risk.

In December, ASEAN Foreign Ministers expressed concerns about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their unease over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

And that entrenched competition between the great powers is already eroding the stability and security our region needs.

The existing system of rules and norms is already under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not evolved in turn.

The inability to reach consensus in so many fora means that a collective approach to counter these grayzone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

These factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades – with a higher degree of uncertainty and risk of miscalculation that could lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today. I've mentioned Ukraine, whose people continue the fight for their homeland with the support of many friends, including Australia which has contributed xxx.

And we are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

There remains real danger that that conflict will spread further through the region, with potential consequences so destructive they are impossible to overstate.

But already the situation in Gaza is catastrophic.

Israel rightly had the world's sympathy and concern in the wake of the October 7 attacks by Hamas, when more Jews died on a single day than on any day since the Holocaust.

Now, through the conduct of its response to that attack, the Netanyahu Government has left Israel more isolated than at any time in its history.

More than 650,000 Palestinians are starving.

More than 32,000 civilians and more than 190 aid workers have been killed.

Including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

On Monday add up to date points.

The deaths of Zomi Frankcom and her British, American, Polish and Palestinian colleagues cannot be in vain, and cannot be rationalised away as the fog of war or the cost of defending Israel's interests.

In fact, failure to listen to the international community - failure to respect international humanitarian law - is directly counter to Israel's interests, and true friends of Israel do it no favours by pretending otherwise.

There is good reason for President Biden to remark that Prime Minister Netanyahu is hurting Israel more than helping it.

Chuck Schumer has put it in even starker terms.

Senator Schumer is the Senate Majority Leader in the United States: the highest-ranking Jewish-American ever elected. He is also one of the most pro-Israel politicians in America.

In a comprehensive recent speech that cannot be ignored, Senator Schumer warned that:

Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world.

Unless the Netanyahu Government changes course and complies with the demands of the international community, Israel will continue to lose support.

It cannot ignore the watershed moment two weeks ago, when not one country voted against a binding ceasefire resolution at the UN Security Council.

Not one country exercised a veto. Not the United States, nor Russia, nor China – each of whom had vetoed previous resolutions.

That resolution came more than 100 days after Australia voted with 152 other countries in the General Assembly for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

We continue to partner with likeminded countries, like Canada and New Zealand, using our voice to advocate for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire that leads to a sustainable ceasefire.

We continue to use our voice to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

We continue to use our voice to advocate for safe and unimpeded humanitarian access and the protection of civilians.

And we continue to use our voice to advocate for a peace that is just and enduring.

It's important to be clear what that means.

A long and painful history has created an inextricable truth: Israelis and Palestinians cannot secure their futures without each other.

Their destinies are tied.

That may sound improbable, given the current conflict and all the conflicts that have preceded it.

Extremists at each end of the spectrum argue for their own people to completely control the land “from the river to the sea” – pushing the other into oblivion.

But both peoples have legitimate and longstanding claims to [these/their] lands.

There is no prospect for peace unless both parties recognise that.

There is no prospect of security for either unless there is security for both.

This means none of us can be a friend of Israelis without also being a friend of Palestinians, nor can we be a friend of Palestinians without also being a friend of Israelis.

The obvious evidence for this on the Israeli side of the equation is that it wants normalised relations with its neighbours.

Its ongoing security relies on it. But it will never happen without an independent Palestinian state.

So Prime Minister Netanyahu's opposition to Palestinian statehood makes Israel less safe.

And there is no scenario for a Palestinian state that is not alongside the state of Israel, [implication/requirement for Palestinian leadership] .

A two-solution doesn't guarantee that there will be no more conflict, but a cycle of conflict – where each sees the other as the aggressor – is guaranteed without it.

There are efforts underway at a grand bargain, bringing these interests together.

And it appears likely that the UN Security Council will be considering full Palestinian membership of the United Nations.

Whether you're a friend of Israelis, a friend of Palestinians, or a friend of both, as I am, we must keep making this undeniable point: Peace requires all sides to respect the right of others to exist.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

Social cohesion

That is the principle I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by insisting on our respective absolutes.

The only way to break the cycle of conflict is by acknowledging the real trauma on all sides, and by coming together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

We ought to model that here, at home, in Australia.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other's humanity and for each other's right to live in peace.

But I have heard language in Australia showing that people here, too, are losing respect for each other's humanity.

People who claim to represent one perspective, seeking to diminish the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

And it's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

There are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

It is not leadership to exploit anxiety, distress and resentment for political benefit.

Yet the Greens political party is willing to spread lies and disinformation to inflame anger and hatred.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

Equally, Mr Dutton needs to decide whether he wants to be a leader in difficult times, or he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

His reflexive aggression sunders Australia's social fabric, and his instinct for conflict is not what Australia needs in the world, either.

Nothing he did as a minister made Australia stronger in the world, or more able to secure our future.

Indeed, in coming to office two years ago we found Australia's standing in our region at one of its lowest points.

The government Mr Dutton helped lead projected a cartoonish parody of toughness but left Australia with fewer friends, less credibility and less trust.

The Australian people recognised security is more than performative belligerence.

They could see more clearly than their government that Australia needed mature leadership for serious times.

And that is what we have delivered.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

Achieving balance in our region requires serious, consistent and measured approach, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

The Albanese Government is making our contribution.

By responding to the needs of our region and building our resilience and sovereignty.

By strengthening our alliances and our partnerships

By ensuring agreed rules and norms underpin our security and prosperity.

This balance requires reassurance to persuade all countries that their interests are best served by peace, and deterrence, to ensure that the costs of aggression continue to outweigh the benefits.

We want Australia to be a partner of choice for the countries of our region. Partners, not patriarchs.

Often, actions to reassure and to deter have been artificially divided.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that limits our potency when we have to maximise all the tools of national power.

Any lever in any domain that creates an unacceptably high cost can serve as a deterrent.

Rules
Economics
Trade

Indeed in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into statecraft, the risk of military capabilities being called into service is greater.

In all of these spheres, states have an opportunity – or even an obligation - to make clear through their actions, not just their words, that they are committed to peaceful resolution of disputes and to upholding the rules and norms.

To working together to build sovereignty and resilience, always in the pursuit of peace, stability and prosperity.

Our approach to statecraft is to identify requires being clear about what are tools for deterrence and how we make sure we use them/Identifying and assessing these

interests and these costs requires understanding the perspective of the other party at the negotiating table.

Our diplomats are just as much in the business of deterrence as reassure. In international organisations like the UN and the WTO, they are defending our interests as rules are [challenged/written etc] In international organisations, we make clear the expectations of the international community and seek to impose costs on those that fall short. It is in the multilateral space where the rules are decided and peace is defended.

At the same time, they advocate, they negotiate, they persuade – to build coalitions, reduce tensions, resolve disputes.

Development/prosperity.

Our economic engagement is not only important for Australian prosperity, but it also creates a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

The benefits of economic interdependence carry with them the potential costs of disruption.

Economic interdependence not misused for strategic and political ends

All of these levers and the balance we seek is underwritten by strong defence capabilities – again, both for reassurance and deterrence.

[Defence force – refer to Marles speech? Our defence forces, capabilities, and working with partners investing in their own. – AUKUS, US alliance, joint sail with Phils and Japan]

And while defence is traditionally seen as an exercise in deterrence, our capabilities assure our neighbours' and partners' security.

And in the military domain, I have consistently spoken of the need for open lines of communication.

Joint exercises, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and military-to-military dialogue are all fundamental to keeping the peace.

[mil-mil dialogue, US/China, preventive architecture]

[Pacific]

[gender equality + climate as levers for prosperity and peace]

The Albanese Government is investing in our statecraft, deploying these tools for deterrence and reassurance, to make Australia more stable, confident and secure at home, and more influential in the world.

We have intensified our high-level engagement on key issues affecting our region, including hosting the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the Australia-ASEAN Special Summit in March.

We have resumed regular ministerial engagement with China.

[ASEAN centrality; upgrading our partnerships with Vietnam and Philippines]

This is why expanding dialogue and communication has been at the centre of our approach.

We are strengthening partnerships with those who are committed to bolstering agreed rules in ways that give all countries a say.

[placeholder – what we are doing on nonpro/UNCLOS]

We are working to provide confidence to the world about our peaceful intentions, and to deter those who might seek to harm us.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs of those that would seek to coerce us. Australia is working for a diversified, resilient economy, opening new markets for trade and investment, while growing existing markets.

And we are protecting and nurturing the international trade rules that create certainty and a level playing field for our business and workers.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

Themes/Issues:

- *us (serious, responsible, measured, credentialed) vs them (wrecking ball, [thug], failed)*
- *all arms of statecraft, focus on broadening deterrence*
- *comprehensive ME discussion – international/domestic*

INTRODUCTION

Thank you (Rory) for your introduction and to ... for [acknowledgement of country].

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

With an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

A pluralist nation, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia’s connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, expressed in travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our national heritage: drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and families of more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This rich heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset, giving us perspective, wisdom and experience that we now apply in shaping our future in the Indo-Pacific.

It is wisdom and experience of the differences our choices can make in the world, and how what happens in the world can make a difference to us.

It is wisdom and experience in contributing to stability and prosperity; in knowing the costs of war, and the value of peace.

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

So we want to maintain peace – but a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and disagree.

We want each country – large or small – to operate by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, by contributing our efforts the balance of our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by working with our friends and partners to combine reassurance and deterrence, so no potential aggressor thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Big players are intimidating smaller ones.

[bridging line]

But longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the UNSC Committee Panel of Experts after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, including illegal arms transfers to Russia to aid its war effort.

Myanmar placeholder

Incursions by Chinese aircraft in the Taiwan Strait have become a daily event.

And China's vessels have used water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew near the Second Thomas Shoal.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at risk.

In December, ASEAN Foreign Ministers expressed concerns about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their unease over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

And that entrenched competition between the great powers is already eroding the stability and security our region needs.

The existing system of rules and norms is already under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not evolved in turn.

The inability to reach consensus in so many fora means that a collective approach to counter these grayzone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

These factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades – with a higher degree of uncertainty and risk of miscalculation that could lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today. I've mentioned Ukraine, whose people continue the fight for their homeland with the support of many friends, including Australia which has contributed xxx.

And we are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

There remains real danger that that conflict will spread further through the region, with potential consequences so destructive they are impossible to overstate.

But already the situation in Gaza is catastrophic.

Israel rightly had the world's sympathy and concern in the wake of the October 7 attacks by Hamas, when more Jews died on a single day than on any day since the Holocaust.

Now, through the conduct of its response to that attack, the Netanyahu Government has left Israel more isolated than at any time in its history.

More than 650,000 Palestinians are starving.

More than 32,000 civilians and more than 190 aid workers have been killed.

Including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

On Monday add up to date points.

The deaths of Zomi Frankcom and her British, American, Polish and Palestinian colleagues cannot be in vain, and cannot be rationalised away as the fog of war or the cost of defending Israel's interests.

In fact, failure to listen to the international community - failure to respect international humanitarian law - is directly counter to Israel's interests, and true friends of Israel do it no favours by pretending otherwise.

There is good reason for President Biden to remark that Prime Minister Netanyahu is hurting Israel more than helping it.

Chuck Schumer has put it in even starker terms.

Senator Schumer is the Senate Majority Leader in the United States: the highest-ranking Jewish-American ever elected. He is also one of the most pro-Israel politicians in America.

In a comprehensive recent speech that cannot be ignored, Senator Schumer warned that:

Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world.

Unless the Netanyahu Government changes course and complies with the demands of the international community, Israel will continue to lose support.

It cannot ignore the watershed moment two weeks ago, when not one country voted against a binding ceasefire resolution at the UN Security Council.

Not one country exercised a veto. Not the United States, nor Russia, nor China – each of whom had vetoed previous resolutions.

That resolution came more than 100 days after Australia voted with 152 other countries in the General Assembly for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

We continue to partner with likeminded countries, like Canada and New Zealand, using our voice to advocate for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire that leads to a sustainable ceasefire.

We continue to use our voice to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

We continue to use our voice to advocate for safe and unimpeded humanitarian access and the protection of civilians.

And we continue to use our voice to advocate for a peace that is just and enduring.

It's important to be clear what that means.

A long and painful history has created an inextricable truth: Israelis and Palestinians cannot secure their futures without each other.

Their destinies are tied.

That may sound improbable, given the current conflict and all the conflicts that have preceded it.

Extremists at each end of the spectrum argue for their own people to completely control the land “from the river to the sea” – pushing the other into oblivion.

But both peoples have legitimate and longstanding claims to [these/their] lands.

There is no prospect for peace unless both parties recognise that.

There is no prospect of security for either unless there is security for both.

This means none of us can be a friend of Israelis without also being a friend of Palestinians, nor can we be a friend of Palestinians without also being a friend of Israelis.

The obvious evidence for this on the Israeli side of the equation is that it wants normalised relations with its neighbours.

Its ongoing security relies on it. But it will never happen without an independent Palestinian state.

So Prime Minister Netanyahu's opposition to Palestinian statehood makes Israel less safe.

And there is no scenario for a Palestinian state that is not alongside the state of Israel, [implication/requirement for Palestinian leadership] .

A two-solution doesn't guarantee that there will be no more conflict, but a cycle of conflict – where each sees the other as the aggressor – is guaranteed without it.

There are efforts underway at a grand bargain, bringing these interests together.

And it appears likely that the UN Security Council will be considering full Palestinian membership of the United Nations.

Whether you're a friend of Israelis, a friend of Palestinians, or a friend of both, as I am, we must keep making this undeniable point: Peace requires all sides to respect the right of others to exist.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

Social cohesion

That is the principle I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by insisting on our respective absolutes.

The only way to break the cycle of conflict is by acknowledging the real trauma on all sides, and by coming together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

We ought to model that here, at home, in Australia.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other's humanity and for each other's right to live in peace.

But I have heard language in Australia showing that people here, too, are losing respect for each other's humanity.

People who claim to represent one perspective, seeking to diminish the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

And it's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

There are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

It is not leadership to exploit anxiety, distress and resentment for political benefit.

Yet the Greens political party is willing to spread lies and disinformation to inflame anger and hatred.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

Equally, Mr Dutton needs to decide whether he wants to be a leader in difficult times, or he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

His reflexive aggression sunders Australia's social fabric, and his instinct for conflict is not what Australia needs in the world, either.

Nothing he did as a minister made Australia stronger in the world, or more able to secure our future.

Indeed, in coming to office two years ago we found Australia's standing in our region at one of its lowest points.

The government Mr Dutton helped lead projected a cartoonish parody of toughness but left Australia with fewer friends, less credibility and less trust.

The Australian people recognised security is more than performative belligerence.

They could see more clearly than their government that Australia needed mature leadership for serious times.

And that is what we have delivered.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

[link]

Achieving balance in our region requires serious, consistent and measured approach, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

The Albanese Government is making our contribution – taking forward the legacies of prime ministers Whitlam, Curtin and Evatt in prioritising regional partnerships, alliances and the rules.

Australia wants to be a partner of choice for the countries of our region.

We do this by responding to the needs of our region and building our collective resilience and sovereignty.

Australia is doing this through our regional partnerships with ASEAN, the Pacific Islands Forum and the countries of the Indian Ocean.

We have intensified our high-level engagement on key issues affecting our region, including hosting the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the Australia-ASEAN Special Summit in March.

We have resumed regular ministerial engagement with China.

Stabilising our relationship with China has not only enabled Australia to speak directly to China's leadership, but also has assisted in rebuilding our influence with regional partners.

[positive line about China's economic role/growth + lifting of trade impediments]

[development/prosperity – gender equality and climate in the development policy]

[Southeast Asia Economic Strategy]

[Falepili Union and Pacific approach]

The Indo-Pacific would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States and its security guarantee to the region.

The United States is our closest ally and principal strategic partner.

The whole region benefits from US engagement, from their contribution to the region's strategic balance.

[additional US line]

Since I became Foreign Minister, I have consistently reiterated US calls for open lines of communication with China and said it was in all of our interests for those overtures to be met.

We welcome the resumption of leader-level and military-level dialogue between the United States and China.

These are important steps on the path towards stability that the region has called for.

It is also a reminder of the role militaries must play in reassurance, as well as deterrence.

The circumstances we face only reinforces the need for militaries to be in contact.

And the evolving nature of these threats mean that the need for new preventive architecture has only grown, to reinforce the region's existing economic and security arrangements.

As military capabilities grow, we know that a level of transparency is expected from our partners – an expectation that not all have met.

[placeholder for NDS/Marles speech]

AUKUS represents an evolution of our relationships with the US and the UK, helping make Australia itself a stronger security partner for the region.

[placeholder for Japan AUKUS announcement]

Australia has worked closely with our partners to engage at every step of this process.

Providing transparency to our region. Working closely with the IAEA. I welcome DG Grossi's comments that [xxx].

Because Australia knows that international rules and norms are a deterrent to conflict that underpin our security and prosperity.

We are committed to upholding the rules and to ensuring that our institutions reflect the voices and views of those that had not had seats at the table.

Australia's enduring commitment is to a world without nuclear weapons.

We will continue to work with others to strengthen the NPT – the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime – despite those who seek to damage it for their own gains.

We are urging progress on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, to address a critical gap in our disarmament architecture, by stopping the production of material needed to create nuclear weapons.

[placeholder – what we are doing on UNCLOS/High Seas/arms control]

All of these are steps towards what has to be our ultimate goal – to avoid conflict, and sustain peace.

This requires reassurance to persuade all countries that their interests are best served by peace, and deterrence, to ensure that the costs of aggression continue to outweigh the benefits.

Assessing this calculus requires a deep understanding the perspective of the other party at the negotiating table.

Often, security discourses have artificially divided actions to reassure and to deter.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that limits our potency when we have to maximise all the tools of national power.

Any lever in any domain that creates an unacceptably high cost can serve as a deterrent.

Whether that is in the multilateral space through international rules and norms, where the rules are decided and peace is defended.

Or through trade and investment – where benefits of economic interdependence carry with them the potential costs of disruption.

We have already seen economic interdependence be misused for strategic and political ends.

Conversely, economic integration provides a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

And I want to make a point about our diplomats – who build coalitions, reduce tensions, resolve disputes – they are at the frontlines of our efforts to deter conflict.

And our diplomacy is underwritten by our military capability.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs of those that would seek to coerce us.

Indeed in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into these levers, the risk of military capabilities being called into service is greater.

In all of these spheres, states have an opportunity – or even an obligation - to make clear through their actions, not just their words, that they are committed to peaceful resolution of disputes and to upholding the rules and norms.

CONCLUSION

TBC

Australia is working to provide confidence to the world about our peaceful intentions, and to deter those who might seek to harm us.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Thank you (Rory) for your introduction and to ... for [acknowledgement of country].

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

With an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

A pluralist nation, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia’s connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, expressed in travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our national heritage: drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and families of more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This rich heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset, giving us perspective, wisdom and experience that we now apply in shaping our future in the Indo-Pacific.

It is wisdom and experience of the differences our choices can make in the world, and how what happens in the world can make a difference to us.

It is wisdom and experience in contributing to stability and prosperity; in knowing the costs of war, and the value of peace.

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

So we want to maintain peace – but a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and disagree.

We want each country – large or small – to operate by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, by contributing our efforts the balance of our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by working with our friends and partners to combine reassurance and deterrence, so no potential aggressor thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Big players are intimidating smaller ones.

[bridging line]

But longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the UNSC Committee Panel of Experts after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, including illegal arms transfers to Russia to aid its war effort.

Myanmar placeholder

Incursions by Chinese aircraft in the Taiwan Strait have become a daily event.

And China's vessels have used water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew near the Second Thomas Shoal.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at risk.

In December, ASEAN Foreign Ministers expressed concerns about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their unease over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

And that entrenched competition between the great powers is already eroding the stability and security our region needs.

The existing system of rules and norms is already under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not evolved in turn.

The inability to reach agreement in so many fora means that a collective approach to counter these grayzone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

These factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades – with a higher degree of risk that miscalculation could lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today. I've mentioned Ukraine, whose people continue the fight for their homeland with the support of many friends, including Australia which has contributed xxx.

And we are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

There remains real danger that conflict will spread further through the region, with potential consequences so destructive they are impossible to overstate.

But already the situation in Gaza is catastrophic.

Israel rightly had the world's sympathy and concern in the wake of the October 7 attacks by Hamas, when more Jews died on a single day than on any day since the Holocaust.

Now, through the conduct of its response to that attack, the Netanyahu Government has left Israel more isolated than at any time in its history.

More than 650,000 Palestinians are starving.

More than 32,000 civilians and more than 190 aid workers have been killed.

Including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

On Monday add up to date points on investigation/accountability.

The deaths of Zomi Frankcom and her British, American, Polish and Palestinian colleagues cannot be in vain, and cannot be rationalised away as the cost of defending Israel's interests.

In fact, failure to listen to the international community - failure to respect international humanitarian law - is directly counter to Israel's interests, and true friends of Israel do it no favours by pretending otherwise.

There is good reason for President Biden to remark that Prime Minister Netanyahu is hurting Israel more than helping it.

Chuck Schumer has put it in even starker terms.

Senator Schumer is the Senate Majority Leader in the United States: the highest-ranking Jewish-American ever elected. He is also one of the most pro-Israel politicians in America.

In a comprehensive recent speech that cannot be ignored, Senator Schumer warned that:

Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world.

Unless the Netanyahu Government changes course and complies with the demands of the international community, Israel will continue to lose support.

It cannot ignore the watershed ceasefire resolution at the UN Security Council two weeks ago.

Not one country voted against it and not one country exercised a veto. Not the United States, nor Russia, nor China – each of whom had vetoed previous resolutions.

That resolution came more than 100 days after Australia voted with 152 other countries in the General Assembly for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

We continue to partner with likeminded countries, like Canada and New Zealand, using our voice to advocate for that immediate humanitarian ceasefire, leading to a sustainable ceasefire.

We continue to use our voice to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

We continue to use our voice to advocate for safe and unimpeded humanitarian access and the protection of civilians.

And we continue to use our voice to advocate for a peace that is just and enduring.

It's important to be clear what that means.

A long and painful history has created an inextricable truth: Israelis and Palestinians cannot secure their futures without each other.

Their destinies are tied.

That may sound improbable, given the current conflict and all the conflicts that have preceded it.

Extremists at each end of the spectrum argue for their own people to completely control the land “from the river to the sea” – pushing the other into oblivion.

But both peoples have legitimate and longstanding claims to [these/their] lands.

There is no prospect for peace unless both parties recognise that.

There is no prospect of security for either unless there is security for both.

This means none of us can be a friend of Israelis without also being a friend of Palestinians, nor can we be a friend of Palestinians without also being a friend of Israelis.

The obvious evidence for this on the Israeli side of the equation is that it wants normalised relations with its neighbours.

Its ongoing security relies on it. But it will never happen without an independent Palestinian state.

So Prime Minister Netanyahu's opposition to Palestinian statehood makes Israel less safe.

And Palestinian leaders must recognise there is no scenario for a Palestinian state that is not alongside the state of Israel.

A two-solution doesn't guarantee that there will be no more conflict, but a cycle of conflict – where each sees the other as the aggressor – is guaranteed without it.

There are efforts underway at a grand bargain, bringing Palestinian, Israeli and regional interests together.

And the UN Security Council is considering full Palestinian membership of the United Nations.

We must all persist towards this goal.

Because whether you're a friend of Israelis, a friend of Palestinians, or a friend of both, as I am, we must keep making this undeniable point: Peace requires all sides to respect the right of others to exist.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

Social cohesion

That is also the principle I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by insisting on respective absolutes.

The only way to break the cycle of conflict is by acknowledging the real trauma on all sides, and by coming together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

We ought to model that here, at home, in Australia.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other's humanity and for each other's right to live in peace.

But I have heard language in Australia showing that people here, too, are losing respect for each other's humanity.

People who claim to represent one perspective, seeking to diminish the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

And it's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

There are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

It is not leadership to exploit anxiety, distress and resentment for political benefit.

Yet the Greens political party is willing to spread lies and disinformation to inflame anger and hatred.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

Equally, Mr Dutton needs to decide whether he wants to be a leader in difficult times, or he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

His reflexive aggression sunders Australia's social fabric - and his instinct for conflict is not what Australia needs in the world, either.

Nothing he did as a minister made Australia stronger in the world, or more able to secure our future.

Indeed, in coming to office two years ago we found Australia's standing in our region at one of its lowest points.

The government Mr Dutton helped lead projected a cartoonish parody of toughness but left Australia with fewer friends, less credibility and less trust.

The Australian people recognise security is more than performative belligerence.

They could see more clearly than their government that Australia needed mature leadership for serious times.

And that is what we have delivered.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

[link – inc re-introducing balance and stepping out concept as relates to peace etc]

Achieving balance in our region requires serious, consistent and measured approach, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

The Albanese Government is making our contribution – taking forward the legacies of prime ministers Whitlam, Curtin and Evatt in prioritising regional partnerships, alliances and rules.

Australia has to be a partner of choice for the countries of our region.

And the Albanese Government is achieving this by building our collective resilience and sovereignty, and by responding to the needs of our region.

Australia is doing this through our regional partnerships with ASEAN, the Pacific Islands Forum and the countries of the Indian Ocean.

We have intensified our high-level engagement on key issues affecting our region, including hosting the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the Australia-ASEAN Special Summit in March.

We have resumed regular ministerial engagement with China.

Stabilising our relationship with China has not only enabled Australia to speak directly to China's leadership, but also has assisted in rebuilding our credibility and influence with regional partners.

[nice line about China's economic role/growth + lifting of trade impediments]

[development/prosperity – gender equality and climate in the development policy]

[Southeast Asia Economic Strategy]

[We are investing more than ever in the Pacific.

From climate finance to sport, and policing and maritime cooperation – guided by the needs of our Pacific partners and the Forum, in the Pacific way.

Delivering Pacific-led approaches to peace and security in our shared region, and unlocking more opportunities for the Pacific family to access and contribute to our economy and communities.

The Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union embodies our approach – responding to a request from Tuvalu, respecting sovereignty, addressing our shared climate and security challenges and enabling mobility with dignity.

It is the biggest step Australia has taken with a Pacific neighbour since the independence of Papua New Guinea nearly 50 years ago.

[link]

The Indo-Pacific would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States and its security guarantee to the region.

The United States is our closest ally and principal strategic partner.

The whole region benefits from US engagement, from their contribution to the region's strategic balance.

[additional US line]

Since I became Foreign Minister, I have consistently reiterated US calls for open lines of communication with China and said it was in all of our interests for those overtures to be met.

We welcome the resumption of leader-level and military-level dialogue between the United States and China.

These are important steps on the path towards stability that the region has called for.

It is also a reminder of the role militaries must play in reassurance, as well as deterrence.

The circumstances we face only reinforces the need for militaries to be in contact.

And the evolving nature of these threats mean that the need for new preventive architecture has only grown, to reinforce the region's existing economic and security arrangements.

As military capabilities grow, we know that a level of transparency is expected from our partners – an expectation that not all have met.

[placeholder for NDS/Marles speech]

AUKUS represents an evolution of our relationships with the US and the UK, helping make Australia itself a stronger balancing partner for the region.

[placeholder for Japan AUKUS announcement]

Australia has worked closely with our partners to engage at every step of this process.

Providing transparency to our region. Working closely with the IAEA. I welcome DG Grossi's comments that [xxx].

Because Australia knows the international rules and norms are a deterrent to conflict that underpin our security and prosperity.

So Australia must always uphold the rules and strive to ensure that our institutions reflect the voices and views of those that have not always been represented.

Australia's enduring commitment is to a world without nuclear weapons.

We will continue to work with others to strengthen the NPT – the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime – despite those who seek to damage it for their own gains.

We are urging progress on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, to address a critical gap in our disarmament architecture, by stopping the production of material needed to create nuclear weapons.

[placeholder – what we are doing on UNCLOS/High Seas/arms control]

All of these steps are for the ultimate goal – to avert conflict, and sustain peace.

These steps provide reassurance to persuade all countries that their interests are best served by peace, and deterrence, to ensure that the costs of aggression continue to outweigh the benefits.

Identifying and assessing these interests and these costs requires understanding the perspective of the other party at the negotiating table.

Often, security discourses have artificially divided actions to reassure and to deter.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that limits our potency when we have to maximise all the tools of national power.

Any lever in any domain that creates an unacceptably high cost can serve as a deterrent.

For example, deterrence is an important lens to view trade and investment – where benefits of economic interdependence carry with them the potential costs of disruption.

We have already seen economic interdependence be misused for strategic and political ends.

Conversely, economic integration provides a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

And I already mentioned the rules as an important deterrent. That's why multilateral engagement in international organisations like the UN is a core national interest, too often dismissed by some.

These organisations are where the rules are decided and peace is defended. As the saying goes, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

And I want to make a point about our diplomats – who build coalitions, reduce tensions, resolve disputes – they are at the frontlines of our efforts to deter conflict.

And our diplomacy is underwritten by our military capability.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs of those that would seek to coerce us.

Indeed in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into these levers, the risk of military capabilities being called into service is greater.

In all of these spheres, states have an opportunity – or even an obligation - to make clear through their actions, not just their words, that they are committed to peaceful resolution of disputes and to upholding the rules and norms.

CONCLUSION

Tie themes together and throw ahead, warn of backsliding (ie opposition risk)

V1

And we are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

There remains real danger that conflict will spread further through the region, with potential consequences so destructive they are impossible to overstate.

But already the situation in Gaza is catastrophic.

Israel rightly had the world's sympathy and concern in the wake of the October 7 attacks by Hamas, when more Jews died on a single day than on any day since the Holocaust.

Hamas continues to hold more than 100 hostages, and continues to declare itself an existential threat to Israel.

Any country under attack by Hamas would defend itself. And in defending itself, every country is bound by the same rules.

But today, more than one million Palestinians are on the brink of famine.

More than 32,000 **civilians** and more than 190 aid workers have been killed.

Including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

Placeholder for update on investigation/accountability.

By brushing it aside, Mr Netanyahu prompted many people to ask, how many innocents have died by "mistaken identification" or a failure to distinguish non-combatants.

There is good reason for President Biden's remark that Mr Netanyahu is hurting Israel more than helping it.

His sentiments have been amplified by Senator Schumer, the highest-ranking Jewish-American ever elected. Senator Schumer recently said:

Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world.

There are few more resolute friends of Israel than President Biden and Senator Schumer.

Their comments underline this reality: People who claim to be friends of Israel do it no favours by refusing to insist Mr Netanyahu changes course and complies with international law.

We cannot pick and choose when we apply the rules. They exist to protect us all.

That's why the Australian Government has been consistent in our call for the application of international humanitarian law, for the protection of civilians, for the release of hostages, for restraint.

That's why we have called on all parties to comply with the recent UN Security Council ceasefire resolution – that no country voted against and no country vetoed.

This weekend marks four months since Australia joined 152 other countries in voting for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. This must happen to enable a sustainable ceasefire and a path to a just and enduring peace.

Such a peace cannot be achieved when people don't respect each other's right to exist.

This includes Hamas and those who rationalise its abuses perpetrated on Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Extremists at each end of the spectrum argue for their own people to completely control the land "from the river to the sea" – pushing the other into oblivion.

This brings us to the necessity of a two-state solution.

Both peoples have legitimate and longstanding claims.

Palestinians are entitled to the state they have been promised for decades.

And Israel won't achieve its central security goal of normalising relations with the countries of the region without a Palestinian state.

Yet we are now thirty years on from the Oslo Accords that put Palestinian statehood at the end of a process.

The failure is obvious because the end of the process is further from view than it was thirty years go.

And that is partly because those on either side who don't want a two-state solution have an incentive to undermine the process.

Mr Netanyahu does not support a two-state solution – directly contrary to Israel's own security goal of normalising relations in the region.

And his Government's relentless settlement activity makes a viable Palestinian state increasingly impossible.

Yet under current arrangements, the Netanyahu Government is the gatekeeper of Palestinian statehood.

This is where the international community has a role to play, to insist on the settings that enable peace.

To provide a pathway out of this conflict that offers a just and enduring peace and locks in progress toward Palestinian statehood and long-term security for Israel.

Australia will do what we can to support and add momentum to such a pathway – because the Albanese Government has always said that we are guided by the principle of the pursuit of peace and progress towards a two-state solution.

Recognition of a Palestinian state - one that can only exist side by side with a secure Israel – offers the Palestinian people a legitimate political horizon, economic opportunity, and strengthens the forces for peace at the expense of Hamas.

But recognition is not the end of the matter. The international community – and particularly the countries of the region – will have a huge job to do to help ensure Palestine is a successful state with economic opportunity to sustain its people.

We know that for a Palestinian state to realise its potential, a reformed, legitimate and strengthened Palestinian Authority will be required.

There can be no role for Hamas. There is no point creating a Palestinian state for it to simply turn into Afghanistan or North Korea.

A two-state solution doesn't guarantee that there will be no more conflict, but the cycle of conflict is guaranteed without it.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

Social cohesion

There is a need to acknowledge the real trauma on all sides, to acknowledge each other's humanity, and to come together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

That is also the approach I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by insisting on respective absolutes.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other and our right to live in peace.

But I have heard language in Australia showing that people here, too, are losing respect for each other's humanity.

People who claim to represent one perspective, seeking to diminish the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

And it's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

There are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

It is not leadership to exploit anxiety, distress and resentment for political benefit.

Yet the Greens political party is willing to spread lies and disinformation to inflame anger and hatred.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

Equally, Mr Dutton needs to decide if he wants to be a leader in difficult times - or if he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

The Australian people already decided at the last election that we need more than a cartoonish parody of toughness that left Australia with fewer friends, less credibility and less trust.

Australians know our country needs mature leadership for serious times.

MIDDLE EAST COMPONENT - BLENDED VERSION

We are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

On October 7, Israel was brutally attacked by Hamas.

Not only was this the greatest loss of Jewish life in a single day since the Holocaust, Hamas continues to hold x hostages.

Australia remains steadfast in our call for the immediate and unconditional release of remaining hostages – families of whom I met with in Israel earlier this year.

Any country under attack by Hamas would defend itself.

And in defending itself, every country is bound by the same rules.

Israel must comply with international humanitarian law.

It must make major and immediate changes to the conduct of its military campaign, to protect civilians.

It must comply with the binding ruling of the International Court of Justice, including to enable the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance at scale.

Yet six months into this conflict, more than one million Palestinians are starving.

More than 32,000 [x] have been killed; xyz women and children; 194 aid workers, including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

This is why so many countries, including Australia, have called on the Netanyahu Government to change course.

When the steadfastly pro-Israel President Biden cautions that Mr Netanyahu “is hurting Israel more than helping”...

And when Senator Schumer, who acknowledges himself as the highest-ranking Jewish-American ever elected, expresses concern that “Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world”...

It is in Israel’s own interest that the Netanyahu Government responds to the demands of the international community.

Anyone who considers themselves a friend of Israel should be making that point.

In addition to our demand for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, enabling the release of hostages, the protection of civilians, and safe and unimpeded humanitarian access...

In addition to these urgent priorities, we need to build the pathway out of the endless cycle of violence.

We need to build the pathway to a peace that is enduring, and just.

The premise has to be acknowledgement of each other's right to exist.

Because the simple truth is that a secure and prosperous future for both Israelis and Palestinians will only come with a two-state solution. A Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

Yet Quote Netanyahu recent statement against 2 state.

We are now thirty years on from the Oslo Accords that put Palestinian statehood at the end of a process.

There is widespread frustration with the failure of this approach - and frustration with the refusal of the Netanyahu Government to engage on the question.

So international momentum is now building to recognise Palestinian statehood as a way to lock in progress toward the required two-state solution.

There are always those who claim recognition is rewarding the enemy.

This is wrong for two reasons.

First, Israel's own security depends on a two-state solution.

There is no long-term security for Israel unless it is recognised by the countries of its region.

But the normalisation agenda that was being pursued before October 7 cannot proceed without progress on Palestinian statehood.

Second, there is no role for Hamas in a future Palestinian state.

Hamas is a terrorist organisation which has the explicit intent of the destruction of the state of Israel and the Jewish people.

Hamas also rains terror on the Palestinian people.

Recognising a Palestinian state – one that can only exist side by side with a secure Israel – not only offers the Palestinian people an opportunity to realise their aspirations, it also strengthens the forces for peace at the expense of Hamas.

And it is the only hope to break the endless cycle of violence.

Australia's diplomacy and decisions are focused on helping advance this lasting peace – which is what we have always said we would do.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

There is a need to acknowledge the real trauma on all sides, to acknowledge each other's humanity, and to come together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

That is also the approach I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

Many amongst us increasingly struggle to discuss this conflict without condemning their fellow citizens.

This imperils our democracy. We have to keep listening to each other; respecting each other.

But I have heard language demonstrating that people are losing respect for each other's humanity.

Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

I've heard people who claim to represent one perspective, diminishing the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

And it's not ok to excuse egregious acts, just because they're done by your side.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by insisting on respective absolutes.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other and our right to live in peace.

Yet there are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

The Greens political party is willing to amplify disinformation, exploiting distress for votes.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

At the same time, Mr Dutton reflexively dismisses concern for Palestinians as " Hamas sympathising."

On this, and in his approach to the world, Mr Dutton needs to decide if he wants to be a leader in difficult times - or if he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

The Australian people already decided at the last election that we need more than a cartoonish parody of toughness that left Australia with fewer friends, less credibility and less trust.

Australians know our country needs mature leadership for serious times.

And a conflict too many Australians are increasingly unable to discuss without descending into condemnation and anger.

This is a danger to our democracy.

We have to regain our willingness to listen.

We must remember that respectful disagreement is central to our democratic system.

OFFCUTS

A conflict with such horrific loss of human life, and such depth of suffering.

A conflict in danger of spreading further through the region with consequences so destructive they cannot be overstated.

A conflict that is hardening hatred in the region and beyond.

A conflict fuelling anger and intolerance here at home.

A conflict in which too often people refuse to see our common humanity.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Thank you Vice Chancellor Bell for hosting us this evening, and to Chelsea our MC. Rory, thank you for your introduction.

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would like to acknowledge my Ministerial colleagues, the Treasurer and Attorney General. I would also like to acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues, the Shadow Defence Minister Andrew Hastie, departmental secretaries, directors general, members of the diplomatic corps. Thank you all for being here this evening. [re-check on Tuesday]

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

With an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

A pluralist nation, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia’s connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, expressed in travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our rich heritage: drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and families of more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset, giving us perspective, wisdom and experience that we now apply in shaping our future in the Indo-Pacific.

It is wisdom and experience of understanding that our choices can make a difference in the world. And how what happens in the world makes a difference to us.

It is wisdom and experience in contributing to stability and prosperity; in knowing the costs of war, and the value of peace.

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

We want to maintain peace.

And we want a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and disagree.

We want each country – large or small – to operate by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, by contributing our efforts the balance of our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by working with our friends and partners to combine reassurance and deterrence, so no potential aggressor thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Big players are intimidating smaller ones.

Longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the UNSC Committee Panel of Experts on the DPRK after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, including illegal arms transfers to Russia to aid its war effort.

Just over three years ago, Myanmar's military junta overthrew the democratically elected government of Myanmar, and continues to commit unspeakable atrocities and human rights violations against its own people.

And China's vessels have used water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew in the South China Sea.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at risk.

In December, ASEAN Foreign Ministers expressed concerns about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their unease over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

Entrenched competition between the great powers is already eroding the stability and security our region needs.

The existing system of rules and norms is already under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not evolved in turn.

The inability to reach agreement in so many fora means that a collective approach to counter these grayzone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

These factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades – with a higher degree of risk that miscalculation could lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today. I've mentioned Ukraine, whose people continue the fight for their homeland with the support of many friends, including Australia which has contributed close to a billion dollars, including around \$780 million in military assistance.

And we are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East – 1000 words on Middle east and social cohesion TBC

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

We take seriously the responsibility to shape the region we want to share: peaceful, stable and prosperous.

A region in balance.

Where countries, large and small, have the freedom to decide our own futures.

Where they operate by the same rules, and have space to agree and to disagree.

Our approach is more important than ever with the character of our region under challenge.

Achieving balance in our region requires serious, consistent and measured approach, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

The Albanese Government is making our contribution – taking forward the legacies of prime ministers Curtin, Whitlam and Evatt in prioritising alliances, regional partnerships and rules.

The Indo-Pacific would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States and its security guarantee to the region.

The United States is our closest ally, and principal strategic partner. The Alliance has only grown in strength and depth in the past two years.

As I have said before, American leadership remains indispensable – it is the great builder of alliances and networks, central to balance in a multipolar region.

I know that will be the case in the future, as it has been for many decades past. We will continue to work closely with whoever is elected by the American people as US President.

And while our whole region benefits from US engagement, Australia has to be a partner of choice for the countries of our region – building our collective resilience and sovereignty.

Australia is listening to our partners and responding to the needs of our region, and intensifying our high-level engagement.

This year we have already hosted the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the Australia-ASEAN Special Summit in March.

We are taking forward regular ministerial engagement with China.

Some imply that there is something to be gained in limiting contact with a power of China's size and weight.

The reality is that China is the world's second largest economy, representing 17% of the world's GDP. China's growth story has been a crucial driver of prosperity in Australia and in our region.

There is no doubt that China will play a pivotal role in our region and world for decades to come. Advancing our interests requires engagement.

Our efforts so far have seen impediments lifted on around \$19 billion worth of Australian exports, by 2019 figures, and we continue to press for outstanding impediments to be resolved.

Stabilising our relationship with China has not only enabled Australia to speak directly to China's leadership about issues that matter to Australia and Australians, but also has helped rebuild our credibility and influence with our partners in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

We are investing more than ever in the Pacific.

From climate finance to sport, and policing and maritime cooperation – guided by the needs of our Pacific partners and the Pacific Islands Forum, in the Pacific way.

Delivering Pacific-led approaches to peace and security in our shared region, and unlocking more opportunities for the Pacific family to access and contribute to our economy and communities.

The Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union embodies our approach – responding to a request from Tuvalu, respecting sovereignty, addressing our shared climate and security challenges and enabling mobility with dignity.

It is the biggest step Australia has taken with a Pacific neighbour since the independence of Papua New Guinea nearly 50 years ago.

We are rebuilding funding for our development and humanitarian programs, targeting climate impacts and gender equality, and have released Australia's first development policy in almost a decade.

We are building shared prosperity with Southeast Asia, including through Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040.

Australia recognises ASEAN centrality as key to the region's stability and security, and appreciates the strength of ASEAN's collective voice.

What happens in the South China Sea, in the Taiwan Strait, in the Mekong subregion, across the Indo-Pacific, affects us all.

It is worrying that incursions by Chinese aircraft in the Taiwan Strait have become a daily event. The risk of an accident, and potential escalation, is growing.

Australia's longstanding and bipartisan position is to oppose unilateral changes to the status quo. We call for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues through dialogue without the threat or use of force or coercion.

Some may say this is insufficient in the circumstances that we face. But I would invite reflection on the alternative.

Since I became Foreign Minister, I have consistently reiterated US calls for open lines of communication with China.

We welcome the resumption of leader-level and military-level dialogue between the United States and China.

It is also a reminder of the role militaries must play in reassurance, as well as deterrence.

The circumstances we face only reinforces the need for militaries to be in contact.

And that the need for new preventive architecture has only grown, to fortify the region's existing security arrangements, and to provide transparency and reassurance.

This is how our government has sought to engage our partners at every step of the AUKUS process.

As military capabilities grow, we know that a level of transparency is expected from our region and our partners – just as we expect transparency of others.

AUKUS represents an evolution of our relationships with the US and the UK, helping make Australia itself a stronger balancing partner for the region.

[placeholder for AUKUS announcement]

Since the announcement of AUKUS, we committed to acquiring conventionally-armed, nuclear powered submarines in a manner that meets the highest non-proliferation standard.

The IAEA DG Grossi has welcomed our continued commitment to openness and transparency. We look forward to our co-presidency of the IAEA's International Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna next month.

Australia has an enduring commitment to a world without nuclear weapons.

We are working to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention, while urging progress on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.

While we continue to monitor progress and work to achieve universal support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, our approach is to focus on practical, constructive efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and build pathways towards their elimination.

Because Australia knows the international rules and norms are a deterrent to conflict that underpin our security and prosperity.

All of these steps are for the ultimate goal – to avert conflict, and sustain peace.

These steps provide reassurance to persuade all countries that their interests are best served by peace, and deterrence, to ensure that the costs of aggression continue to outweigh the benefits.

Often, security discourses have artificially divided actions to reassure and to deter.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that limits our potency when we have to maximise all the tools of national power.

Any lever in any domain that creates an unacceptably high cost can serve as a deterrent.

For example, deterrence is an important lens to view trade and investment – where benefits of economic interdependence carry with them the potential costs of disruption.

Economic integration provides a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

And I already mentioned the rules as an important deterrent. That's why multilateral engagement in international organisations like the UN is a core national interest, too often dismissed by some.

These organisations are where the rules are decided and peace is defended. As the saying goes, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

And I want to make this point about our diplomats – who build coalitions, reduce tensions, resolve disputes. They are central to efforts I have detailed.

Diplomacy frames the calculus that each country faces, and signals intent – an important deterrent.

And our diplomacy is underwritten by our military capability.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles said last week that deterring conflict in today's environment requires a new approach – one that harnesses all elements of our national power.

The new concept of National Defence, underpinning the inaugural National Defence Strategy, comprehends that our nation's front line is diplomacy.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs of those that would seek to coerce us.

Indeed in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into diplomacy and engagement, the risk of military capabilities being called into service is greater.

CONCLUSION

States have an opportunity – or even an obligation - to make clear through their actions, not just their words, that they are committed to peaceful resolution of disputes and to upholding the rules and norms.

Go back to who we are and what we are seeking to secure. Tie themes together and throw ahead

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Thank you Vice Chancellor Bell for hosting us this evening, and to Chelsea our MC. Rory, thank you for your introduction.

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would like to acknowledge my Ministerial colleagues, the Treasurer and Attorney General. I would also like to acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues, the Shadow Defence Minister Andrew Hastie, departmental secretaries, directors general, members of the diplomatic corps. Thank you all for being here this evening. [re-check on Tuesday]

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

With an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

A pluralist nation, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia’s connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, expressed in travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our rich heritage: drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and families of more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset, giving us perspective, wisdom and experience that we now apply in shaping our future in the Indo-Pacific.

It is wisdom and experience of understanding that our choices can make a difference in the world. And how what happens in the world makes a difference to us.

It is wisdom and experience in contributing to stability and prosperity; in knowing the costs of war, and the value of peace.

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

We want to maintain peace.

And we want a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and disagree.

We want each country – large or small – to operate by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, by contributing our efforts the balance of our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by working with our friends and partners to combine reassurance and deterrence, so no potential aggressor thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Big players are intimidating smaller ones.

Longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the UNSC Committee Panel of Experts on the DPRK after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, including illegal arms transfers to Russia to aid its war effort.

Just over three years ago, Myanmar's military junta overthrew the democratically elected government of Myanmar, and continues to commit unspeakable atrocities and human rights violations against its own people.

And China's vessels have used water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew in the South China Sea.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at risk.

In December, ASEAN Foreign Ministers expressed concerns about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their unease over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

Entrenched competition between the great powers is already eroding the stability and security our region needs.

The existing system of rules and norms is already under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not evolved in turn.

The inability to reach agreement in so many fora means that a collective approach to counter these grayzone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

These factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades – with a higher degree of risk that miscalculation could lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today. I've mentioned Ukraine, whose people continue the fight for their homeland with the support of many friends, including Australia which has contributed close to a billion dollars, including around \$780 million in military assistance.

And we are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

There remains real danger that conflict will spread further through the region, with potential consequences so destructive they are impossible to overstate.

But already the situation in Gaza is catastrophic.

Israel rightly had the world's sympathy and concern in the wake of the October 7 attacks by Hamas, when more Jews died on a single day than on any day since the Holocaust.

Hamas continues to hold more than 100 hostages, and continues to declare itself an existential threat to Israel.

Any country under attack by Hamas would defend itself. And in defending itself, every country is bound by the same rules.

But today, more than one million Palestinians are on the brink of famine.

More than 32,000 civilians and more than 190 aid workers have been killed.

Including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

Placeholder for update on investigation/accountability.

By brushing it aside, Mr Netanyahu prompted many people to ask, how many innocents have died by "mistaken identification" or a failure to distinguish non-combatants.

There is good reason for President Biden's remark that Mr Netanyahu is hurting Israel more than helping it.

His sentiments have been amplified by Senator Schumer, the highest-ranking Jewish-American ever elected. Senator Schumer recently said:

Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world.

There are few more resolute friends of Israel than President Biden and Senator Schumer.

Their comments underline this reality: People who claim to be friends of Israel do it no favours by refusing to insist Mr Netanyahu changes course and complies with international law.

We cannot pick and choose when we apply the rules. They exist to protect us all.

That's why the Australian Government has been consistent in our call for the application of international humanitarian law, for the protection of civilians, for the release of hostages, for restraint.

That's why we have called on all parties to comply with the recent UN Security Council ceasefire resolution – that no country voted against and no country vetoed.

This weekend marks four months since Australia joined 152 other countries in voting for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. This must happen to enable a sustainable ceasefire and a path to a just and enduring peace.

Such a peace cannot be achieved when people don't respect each other's right to exist.

This includes Hamas and those who rationalise its abuses perpetrated on Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Extremists at each end of the spectrum argue for their own people to completely control the land "from the river to the sea" – pushing the other into oblivion.

This brings us to the necessity of a two-state solution.

Both peoples have legitimate and longstanding claims.

Palestinians are entitled to the state they have been promised for decades.

And Israel won't achieve its central security goal of normalising relations with the countries of the region without a Palestinian state.

Yet we are now thirty years on from the Oslo Accords that put Palestinian statehood at the end of a process.

The failure is obvious because the end of the process is further from view than it was thirty years go.

And that is partly because those on either side who don't want a two-state solution have an incentive to undermine the process.

Mr Netanyahu does not support a two-state solution – directly contrary to Israel's own security goal of normalising relations in the region.

And his Government's relentless settlement activity makes a viable Palestinian state increasingly impossible.

Yet under current arrangements, the Netanyahu Government is the gatekeeper of Palestinian statehood.

This is where the international community has a role to play, to insist on the settings that enable peace.

To provide a pathway out of this conflict that offers a just and enduring peace and locks in progress toward Palestinian statehood and long-term security for Israel.

Australia will do what we can to support and add momentum to such a pathway – because the Albanese Government has always said that we are guided by the principle of the pursuit of peace and progress towards a two-state solution.

Recognition of a Palestinian state - one that can only exist side by side with a secure Israel – offers the Palestinian people a legitimate political horizon, economic opportunity, and strengthens the forces for peace at the expense of Hamas.

But recognition is not the end of the matter. The international community – and particularly the countries of the region – will have a huge job to do to help ensure Palestine is a successful state with economic opportunity to sustain its people.

We know that for a Palestinian state to realise its potential, a reformed, legitimate and strengthened Palestinian Authority will be required.

There can be no role for Hamas. There is no point creating a Palestinian state for it to simply turn into Afghanistan or North Korea.

A two-state solution doesn't guarantee that there will be no more conflict, but the cycle of conflict is guaranteed without it.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

Social cohesion

There is a need to acknowledge the real trauma on all sides, to acknowledge each other's humanity, and to come together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

That is also the approach I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by insisting on respective absolutes.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other and our right to live in peace.

But I have heard language in Australia showing that people here, too, are losing respect for each other's humanity.

People who claim to represent one perspective, seeking to diminish the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

And it's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

There are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

It is not leadership to exploit anxiety, distress and resentment for political benefit.

Yet the Greens political party is willing to spread lies and disinformation to inflame anger and hatred.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

Equally, Mr Dutton needs to decide if he wants to be a leader in difficult times - or if he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

The Australian people already decided at the last election that we need more than a cartoonish parody of toughness that left Australia with fewer friends, less credibility and less trust.

Australians know our country needs mature leadership for serious times.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

The Albanese Government is applied to the challenges Australia faces in our region and the world, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

Because this is the only way to advance Australia's interests in a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous.

A region in balance.

Where countries, large and small, have the freedom to decide our own futures.

Where they operate by the same rules, and have space to agree and to disagree.

We make our contribution to a balanced region in how we modernise the legacies of Curtin, Whitlam and Evatt, prioritising alliances, regional partnerships and rules.

The Indo-Pacific would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States and its security guarantee to the region.

The United States is our closest ally, and principal strategic partner. The Alliance has only grown in strength and depth in the past two years.

As I have said before, American leadership remains indispensable – it is the great builder of alliances and networks, central to balance in a multipolar region.

I know that will be the case in the future, as it has been for many decades past. We will continue to work closely with whoever is elected by the American people as US President.

And while our whole region benefits from US engagement, Australia has to be a partner of choice for the countries of our region – building our collective resilience and sovereignty.

Australia is listening to our partners and responding to the needs of our region, and intensifying our high-level engagement.

This year we have already hosted the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the Australia-ASEAN Special Summit in March.

We are taking forward regular ministerial engagement with China.

Some imply that there is something to be gained in limiting contact with a power of China's size and weight.

The reality is that China is the world's second largest economy, representing 17% of the world's GDP. China's growth story has been a crucial driver of prosperity in Australia and in our region.

There is no doubt that China will play a pivotal role in our region and world for decades to come. Advancing our interests requires engagement.

Our efforts so far have seen impediments lifted on around \$19 billion worth of Australian exports, by 2019 figures, and we continue to press for outstanding impediments to be resolved.

Stabilising our relationship with China has not only enabled Australia to speak directly to China's leadership about issues that matter to Australia and Australians, but also has helped rebuild our credibility and influence with our partners in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

We are investing more than ever in the Pacific.

From climate finance to sport, and policing and maritime cooperation – guided by the needs of our Pacific partners and the Pacific Islands Forum, in the Pacific way.

Delivering Pacific-led approaches to peace and security in our shared region, and unlocking more opportunities for the Pacific family to access and contribute to our economy and communities.

The Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union embodies our approach – responding to a request from Tuvalu, respecting sovereignty, addressing our shared climate and security challenges and enabling mobility with dignity.

It is the biggest step Australia has taken with a Pacific neighbour since the independence of Papua New Guinea nearly 50 years ago.

We are rebuilding funding for our development and humanitarian programs, targeting climate impacts and gender equality, and have released Australia's first development policy in almost a decade.

We are building shared prosperity with Southeast Asia, including through Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040.

Australia recognises ASEAN centrality as key to the region's stability and security, and appreciates the strength of ASEAN's collective voice.

What happens in the South China Sea, in the Taiwan Strait, in the Mekong subregion, across the Indo-Pacific, affects us all.

It is worrying that incursions by Chinese aircraft in the Taiwan Strait have become a daily event. The risk of an accident, and potential escalation, is growing.

Australia's longstanding and bipartisan position is to oppose unilateral changes to the status quo. We call for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues through dialogue without the threat or use of force or coercion.

Some may say this is insufficient in the circumstances that we face. But I would invite reflection on the alternative.

Since I became Foreign Minister, I have consistently reiterated US calls for open lines of communication with China.

We welcome the resumption of leader-level and military-level dialogue between the United States and China.

It is also a reminder of the role militaries must play in reassurance, as well as deterrence.

The circumstances we face only reinforces the need for militaries to be in contact.

And that the need for new preventive architecture has only grown, to fortify the region's existing security arrangements, and to provide transparency and reassurance.

This is how our government has sought to engage our partners at every step of the AUKUS process.

As military capabilities grow, we know that a level of transparency is expected from our region and our partners – just as we expect transparency of others.

AUKUS represents an evolution of our relationships with the US and the UK, helping make Australia itself a stronger balancing partner for the region.

[placeholder for AUKUS announcement]

Since the announcement of AUKUS, we committed to acquiring conventionally-armed, nuclear powered submarines in a manner that meets the highest non-proliferation standard.

The IAEA DG Grossi has welcomed our continued commitment to openness and transparency. We look forward to our co-presidency of the IAEA's International Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna next month.

Australia has an enduring commitment to a world without nuclear weapons.

We are working to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention, while urging progress on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.

While we continue to monitor progress and work to achieve universal support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, our approach is to focus on practical, constructive efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and build pathways towards their elimination.

Because Australia knows the international rules and norms are a deterrent to conflict that underpin our security and prosperity.

All of these steps are for the ultimate goal – to avert conflict, and sustain peace.

These steps provide reassurance to persuade all countries that their interests are best served by peace, and deterrence, to ensure that the costs of aggression continue to outweigh the benefits.

Often, security discourses have artificially divided actions to reassure and to deter.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that limits our potency when we have to maximise all the tools of national power.

Any lever in any domain that creates an unacceptably high cost can serve as a deterrent.

For example, deterrence is an important lens to view trade and investment – where benefits of economic interdependence carry with them the potential costs of disruption.

Economic integration provides a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

And I already mentioned the rules as an important deterrent. That's why multilateral engagement in international organisations like the UN is a core national interest, too often dismissed by some.

These organisations are where the rules are decided and peace is defended. As the saying goes, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

And I want to make this point about our diplomats – who build coalitions, reduce tensions, resolve disputes. They are central to efforts I have detailed.

Diplomacy frames the calculus that each country faces, and signals intent – an important deterrent.

And our diplomacy is underwritten by our military capability.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles said last week that deterring conflict in today's environment requires a new approach – one that harnesses all elements of our national power.

The new concept of National Defence, underpinning the inaugural National Defence Strategy, comprehends that our nation's front line is diplomacy.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs of those that would seek to coerce us.

Indeed in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into diplomacy and engagement, the risk of military capabilities being called into service is greater.

CONCLUSION

Balance

States have an opportunity – or even an obligation - to make clear through their actions, not just their words, that they are committed to peaceful resolution of disputes and to upholding the rules and norms.

Go back to who we are and what we are seeking to secure. Tie themes together and throw ahead, warn of backsliding (ie opposition risk)

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Thank you Vice Chancellor Bell for hosting us this evening, and to Chelsea our MC. Rory, thank you for your introduction.

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would like to acknowledge my Ministerial colleagues, the Treasurer and Attorney General. I would also like to acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues, the Shadow Defence Minister Andrew Hastie, departmental secretaries, directors general, members of the diplomatic corps. Thank you all for being here this evening. [re-check on Tuesday]

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

Our people have an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

A pluralist nation, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia’s connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, expressed in travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our rich heritage: drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and families of more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset, giving us perspective, wisdom and experience that we now apply in shaping our future in the Indo-Pacific.

It is wisdom and experience of understanding that our choices can make a difference in the world. And how what happens in the world makes a difference to us.

It is wisdom and experience in contributing to stability and prosperity; in knowing the costs of war, and the value of peace.

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

We want to maintain peace.

And we want a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and disagree.

We want each country – large or small – to operate by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, by contributing our efforts the balance of our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by working with our friends and partners to combine reassurance and deterrence, so no potential aggressor thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the UNSC Committee Panel of Experts on the DPRK after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, including illegal arms transfers to Russia to aid its war effort.

The political, humanitarian and security situation in Myanmar continues to worsen, with far-reaching implications for our region and its people, including the Rohingya.

China's vessels have used water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew in the South China Sea.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at risk.

In December, ASEAN Foreign Ministers expressed concerns about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their unease over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

Entrenched competition between the great powers is already eroding the stability and security our region needs.

The existing system of rules and norms is already under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not evolved in turn.

The inability to reach agreement in so many fora means that a collective approach to counter these grayzone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

These factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades – with a higher degree of risk that miscalculation could lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today.

I've mentioned Ukraine, who continue to heroically fight for their homeland. Australia is steadfast in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

That's why Australia has contributed close to a billion dollars, including around \$780 million in military assistance.

MIDDLE EAST AND SOCIAL COHESION – 1000 WORDS TBC

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

The Albanese Government is applied to the challenges Australia faces in our region and the world, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

Because this is the only way to advance Australia's interests in a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous.

A region in balance.

Where countries, large and small, have the freedom to decide our own futures.

Where they operate by the same rules, and have space to agree and to disagree.

We make our contribution to a balanced region in how we modernise the legacies of Curtin, Whitlam and Evatt, prioritising alliances, the region and the rules.

The Indo-Pacific would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States and its security guarantee to the region.

The United States is our closest ally, and principal strategic partner. The Alliance has only grown in strength and depth in the past two years.

As I have said before, American leadership remains indispensable – it is the great builder of alliances and networks, central to balance in a multipolar region.

I know that will be the case in the future, as it has been for many decades past. We will continue to work closely with whoever is elected by the American people as US President.

And while our whole region benefits from US engagement, Australia has to be a partner of choice for the countries of our region – building our collective resilience and sovereignty.

Australia is listening to our partners and intensifying our high-level engagement.

This year we have already hosted the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the Australia-ASEAN Special Summit in March.

We are taking forward regular ministerial engagement with China.

Some imply that there is something to be gained in limiting contact with a power of China's size and weight.

The reality is that China is the world's second largest economy, representing 17% of global GDP. China's growth story has been a crucial driver of prosperity in Australia, in our region and in the world.

There is no doubt that China will play a pivotal role in our region and world for decades to come. Advancing our interests requires engagement.

Our efforts so far have seen impediments lifted on around \$19 billion worth of Australian exports, by 2019 figures, and we continue to press for outstanding impediments to be resolved.

Stabilising our relationship with China has not only enabled Australia to speak directly to China's leadership about issues that matter to Australia and Australians, but also has helped rebuild our credibility and influence with our partners in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

Guided by the needs of our Pacific partners and the Pacific Islands Forum, we are investing in the Pacific way, including in sport, climate finance, policing and maritime cooperation.

The Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union embodies our approach – responding to a request from Tuvalu, respecting sovereignty, addressing our shared climate and security challenges and enabling mobility with dignity.

It is the biggest step Australia has taken with a Pacific neighbour since the independence of Papua New Guinea nearly 50 years ago.

We are rebuilding funding for our development and humanitarian programs, targeting climate impacts and gender equality, and have released Australia's first development policy in almost a decade.

We are building shared prosperity with Southeast Asia, including through Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040.

Australia recognises ASEAN centrality as key to the region's stability and security, and appreciates the strength of ASEAN's collective voice.

What happens in the South China Sea, in the Taiwan Strait, in the Mekong subregion, across the Indo-Pacific, affects us all.

It is worrying that incursions by Chinese aircraft in the Taiwan Strait have become a daily event. The risk of an accident, and potential escalation, is growing.

Australia's longstanding and bipartisan position is to oppose unilateral changes to the status quo. We call for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues through dialogue without the threat or use of force or coercion.

Some may say this is insufficient in the circumstances that we face. But I would invite reflection on the alternative.

Since I became Foreign Minister, I have emphasised the need for China to respond to US calls for open lines of communication.

We welcome the resumption of leader-level and military-level dialogue between the United States and China, and are encouraging next steps.

It is also a reminder of the role militaries must play in reassurance, as well as deterrence.

The circumstances we face only reinforces the need for militaries to be in contact.

And that the need for new preventive architecture has only grown, to fortify the region's existing security arrangements, and to provide transparency and reassurance.

This is how our government has sought to engage our partners at every step of the AUKUS agreement with the US and UK.

As military capabilities grow, we know that a level of transparency is expected from our region and our partners – just as we expect transparency of others.

[placeholder for AUKUS announcement]

We are committed to AUKUS meeting the highest non-proliferation standard.

The IAEA DG Grossi has welcomed our continued openness and transparency. We look forward to our co-presidency of the IAEA's International Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna next month.

Australia has an enduring commitment to a world without nuclear weapons.

We are working to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention, while urging progress on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.

While we continue to monitor progress and work to achieve universal support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, our approach is to focus on practical, constructive efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and build pathways towards their elimination.

Because Australia knows the international rules and norms are a deterrent to conflict that underpin our security and prosperity.

All of these steps are for the ultimate goal – to avert conflict, and sustain peace.

These steps provide reassurance to persuade all countries that their interests are best served by peace, and deterrence, to ensure that the costs of aggression continue to outweigh the benefits.

Often, security discourses have artificially divided actions to reassure and to deter.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that limits our potency when we have to maximise all the tools of national power.

Any lever in any domain that creates an unacceptably high cost can serve as a deterrent.

For example, deterrence is an important lens to view trade and investment – where benefits of economic interdependence carry with them the potential costs of disruption.

Economic integration provides a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

And I already mentioned the rules as an important deterrent. That's why multilateral engagement in international organisations like the UN is a core national interest, too often dismissed by some.

These organisations are where the rules are decided and peace is defended. As the saying goes, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

And I want to make this point about our diplomats – who build coalitions, reduce tensions, resolve disputes. They are central to efforts I have detailed.

Diplomacy frames the calculus that each country faces, and signals intent – an important deterrent.

And our diplomacy is underwritten by our military capability.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles said last week that deterring conflict in today's environment requires a new approach – one that harnesses all elements of our national power.

The new concept of National Defence, underpinning the inaugural National Defence Strategy, comprehends that our nation's front line is diplomacy.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs of those that would seek to coerce us.

Indeed in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into diplomacy and engagement, the risk of military capabilities being called into service is greater.

CONCLUSION

Balance

States have an opportunity – or even an obligation - to make clear through their actions, not just their words, that they are committed to peaceful resolution of disputes and to upholding the rules and norms.

Go back to who we are and what we are seeking to secure. Tie themes together and throw ahead, warn of backsliding

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Thank you Vice Chancellor Bell for hosting us this evening, and to Chelsea our MC. Rory, thank you for your introduction.

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would like to acknowledge my Ministerial colleagues, the Treasurer and Attorney General. I would also like to acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues, the Shadow Defence Minister Andrew Hastie, departmental secretaries, directors general, members of the diplomatic corps. Thank you all for being here this evening. [re-check on Tuesday]

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

Our people have an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

A pluralist nation, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia’s connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, expressed in travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our rich heritage: drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and families of more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset, giving us perspective, wisdom and experience that we now apply in shaping our future in the Indo-Pacific.

It is wisdom and experience of understanding that our choices can make a difference in the world. And how what happens in the world makes a difference to us.

It is wisdom and experience in contributing to stability and prosperity; in knowing the costs of war, and the value of peace. *[too many steps]*

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

We want to maintain peace.

And we want a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and disagree.

We want each country – large or small – to operate by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, by contributing our efforts the balance of our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by working with our friends and partners to combine reassurance and deterrence, so no potential aggressor thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the UNSC Committee Panel of Experts on the DPRK after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, including illegal arms transfers to Russia to aid its war effort.

The political, humanitarian and security situation in Myanmar continues to worsen, with far-reaching implications for our region and its people, including the Rohingya.

China's vessels have used water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew in the South China Sea.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at risk.

In December, ASEAN Foreign Ministers expressed concerns about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their unease over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

Entrenched competition between the great powers is already eroding the stability and security our region needs.

The existing system of rules and norms is already under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not evolved in turn.

The inability to reach agreement in so many fora means that a collective approach to counter these grayzone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

These factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades – with a higher degree of risk that miscalculation could lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today.

I've mentioned Ukraine, who continue to heroically fight for their homeland. Australia is steadfast in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

That's why Australia has contributed close to a billion dollars, including around \$780 million in military assistance.

MIDDLE EAST TBC

CHALLENGES AT HOME

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

The Albanese Government is applied to the challenges Australia faces in our region and the world, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

Because this is the only way to advance Australia's interests in a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous.

A region in balance.

Where countries, large and small, have the freedom to decide our own futures.

Where they operate by the same rules, and have space to agree and to disagree.

We make our contribution to a balanced region in how we modernise the legacies of Curtin, Whitlam and Evatt, prioritising alliances, the region and the rules.

The Indo-Pacific would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States and its security guarantee to the region.

The United States is our closest ally, and principal strategic partner. The Alliance has only grown in strength and depth in the past two years.

As I have said before, American leadership remains indispensable – it is the great builder of alliances and networks, central to balance in a multipolar region.

I know that will be the case in the future, as it has been for many decades past. We will continue to work closely with whoever is elected by the American people as US President.

And while our whole region benefits from US engagement, Australia has to be a partner of choice for the countries of our region – building our collective resilience and sovereignty.

Australia is listening to our partners and intensifying our high-level engagement.

This year we have already hosted the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the Australia-ASEAN Special Summit in March.

We are taking forward regular ministerial engagement with China.

Some imply that there is something to be gained in limiting contact with a power of China's size and weight.

The reality is that China is the world's second largest economy, representing 17% of the world's GDP. China's growth story has been a crucial driver of prosperity in Australia, in our region and in the world.

There is no doubt that China will play a pivotal role in our region and world for decades to come. Advancing our interests requires engagement.

Our efforts so far have seen impediments lifted on around \$19 billion worth of Australian exports, by 2019 figures, and we continue to press for outstanding impediments to be resolved.

Stabilising our relationship with China has not only enabled Australia to speak directly to China's leadership about issues that matter to Australia and Australians, but also has helped rebuild our credibility and influence with our partners in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

Guided by the needs of our Pacific partners and the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia is investing in the Pacific way, including in sport, climate finance, policing and maritime cooperation.

The Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union embodies our approach – responding to a request from Tuvalu, respecting sovereignty, addressing our shared climate and security challenges and enabling mobility with dignity.

It is the biggest step Australia has taken with a Pacific neighbour since the independence of Papua New Guinea nearly 50 years ago.

We are rebuilding funding for our development and humanitarian programs, targeting climate impacts and gender equality, and have released Australia's first development policy in almost a decade.

We are building shared prosperity with Southeast Asia, including through Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040.

Australia recognises ASEAN centrality as key to the region's stability and security, and appreciates the strength of ASEAN's collective voice.

What happens in the South China Sea, in the Taiwan Strait, in the Mekong subregion, across the Indo-Pacific, affects us all.

It is worrying that incursions by Chinese aircraft in the Taiwan Strait have become a daily event. The risk of an accident, and potential escalation, is growing.

Australia's longstanding and bipartisan position is to oppose unilateral changes to the status quo. We call for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues through dialogue without the threat or use of force or coercion.

Some may say this is insufficient in the circumstances that we face. But I would invite reflection on the alternative.

Since I became Foreign Minister, I have strongly supported US calls for open lines of communication with China.

We welcome the resumption of leader-level and military-level dialogue between the United States and China as important steps on the path towards stability that the region has called for.

This is also a reminder of the role militaries must play in reassurance, as well as deterrence.

The circumstances we face only reinforces the need for militaries to be in contact.

And that the need for new preventive architecture has only grown, to fortify the region's existing security arrangements, and to provide transparency and reassurance.

This is how our government has sought to engage our partners at every step of the AUKUS agreement with the United States and the United Kingdom.

As military capabilities grow, we know that a level of transparency is expected from our region and our partners – just as we expect transparency of others.

[placeholder for AUKUS announcement]

We are committed to AUKUS meeting the highest non-proliferation standard.

The IAEA DG Grossi has welcomed our continued openness and transparency. We look forward to our co-presidency of the IAEA's International Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna next month.

Australia has an enduring commitment to a world without nuclear weapons.

We are working to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention, while urging progress on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.

While we continue to monitor progress and work to achieve universal support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, our approach is to focus on practical, constructive efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and build pathways towards their elimination.

Because Australia knows the international rules and norms are a deterrent to conflict that underpin our security and prosperity.

All of efforts are for the ultimate goal – to avert conflict, and sustain peace.

They provide reassurance to persuade all countries that their interests are best served by peace, and deterrence, to ensure that the costs of aggression continue to outweigh the benefits.

Often, security discourses have artificially divided actions to reassure and to deter.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that limits our potency when we have to maximise all the tools of national power.

As recognised in the Defence Strategic Review, any lever in any domain that creates an unacceptably high cost can serve as a credible deterrent.

In this way, deterrence is an important lens to view trade and investment – where benefits of economic interdependence carry with them the potential costs of disruption.

Economic integration provides a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

And I already mentioned the rules as an important deterrent. That's why multilateral engagement in international organisations like the UN is a core national interest, too often dismissed by some.

These organisations are where the rules are decided and peace is defended. As the saying goes, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

And I want to make this point about our diplomats – who build coalitions, reduce tensions, resolve disputes. They are central to efforts I have detailed.

Diplomacy frames the calculus that each country faces, and signals intent – an important deterrent.

And our diplomacy is underwritten by our military capability.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles said last week that deterring conflict in today's environment requires a new approach – one that harnesses all elements of our national power.

The new concept of National Defence, underpinning the inaugural National Defence Strategy, comprehends that our nation's front line is diplomacy.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs of those that would seek to coerce us.

Indeed in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into diplomacy and engagement, the risk of military capabilities being called into service is greater.

CONCLUSION

Balance

States have an opportunity – or even an obligation - to make clear through their actions, not just their words, that they are committed to peaceful resolution of disputes and to upholding the rules and norms.

Go back to who we are and what we are seeking to secure. Tie themes together and throw ahead, warn of backsliding (ie opposition risk)

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Thank you Vice Chancellor Bell for hosting us this evening, and to Chelsea our MC. Rory, thank you for your introduction.

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would like to acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues, including the Treasurer Jim Chalmers, Attorney General Mark Dreyfus and Shadow Defence Minister Andrew Hastie.

I would also like to acknowledge senior public servants, members of the diplomatic corps and senior members of the defence force here this evening. Thank you all for being here.

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

Our people have an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

A pluralist nation, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia’s connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, through travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our rich heritage: drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and families of more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset. It gives us perspective, wisdom and experience that we now apply in securing our future in the Indo-Pacific.

We secure our future knowing that our choices can make a difference in the world. And knowing what happens in the world makes a difference to us.

Knowing the costs of war, and the value of peace.

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

We want to maintain peace.

And we want a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and disagree.

We want each country – large or small – to operate by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, by contributing our efforts the balance of our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by working with our friends and partners to combine reassurance and deterrence, so no potential aggressor thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the UNSC Committee Panel of Experts on the DPRK after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, including illegal arms transfers to Russia.

The political, humanitarian and security situation in Myanmar continues to worsen, with far-reaching implications for our region and its people, including the Rohingya.

China's vessels have used water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew in the South China Sea.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at risk.

In December, ASEAN Foreign Ministers expressed concerns about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their unease over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

The existing system of rules and norms is already under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not evolved in turn.

The inability to reach agreement in so many fora means that a collective approach to counter these grayzone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

And all together, these factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades – with a higher degree of risk that miscalculation could lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today.

I've mentioned Ukraine, who continue to heroically fight for their homeland against Russia's flagrant breach of the UN Charter.

Australia is steadfast in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

And we are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

On October 7, Israel was brutally attacked by Hamas.

Not only was this the greatest loss of Jewish life in a single day since the Holocaust, Hamas continues to hold x hostages.

Australia remains steadfast in our call for the immediate and unconditional release of remaining hostages – families of whom I met with in Israel earlier this year.

Any country under attack by Hamas would defend itself.

And in defending itself, every country is bound by the same rules.

Israel must comply with international humanitarian law.

It must make major and immediate changes to the conduct of its military campaign, to protect civilians.

It must comply with the binding ruling of the International Court of Justice, including to enable the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance at scale.

Yet six months into this conflict, more than one million Palestinians are starving.

More than 32,000 [x] have been killed; xyz women and children; 194 aid workers, including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

This is why so many countries, including Australia, have called on the Netanyahu Government to change course.

When the steadfastly pro-Israel President Biden cautions that Mr Netanyahu "is hurting Israel more than helping"...

And when Senator Schumer, who acknowledges himself as the highest-ranking Jewish-American ever elected, expresses concern that "Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world"...

It is in Israel's own interest that the Netanyahu Government responds to the demands of the international community.

Anyone who considers themselves a friend of Israel should be making that point.

In addition to our demand for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, enabling the release of hostages, the protection of civilians, and safe and unimpeded humanitarian access...

In addition to these urgent priorities, we need to build the pathway out of the endless cycle of violence.

We need to build the pathway to a peace that is enduring, and just.

The premise has to be acknowledgement of each other's right to exist.

Because the simple truth is that a secure and prosperous future for both Israelis and Palestinians will only come with a two-state solution. A Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

Yet Quote Netanyahu recent statement against 2 state.

We are now thirty years on from the Oslo Accords that put Palestinian statehood at the end of a process.

There is widespread frustration with the failure of this approach - and frustration with the refusal of the Netanyahu Government to engage on the question.

So international momentum is now building to recognise Palestinian statehood as a way to lock in progress toward the required two-state solution.

There are always those who claim recognition is rewarding the enemy.

This is wrong for two reasons.

First, Israel's own security depends on a two-state solution.

There is no long-term security for Israel unless it is recognised by the countries of its region.

But the normalisation agenda that was being pursued before October 7 cannot proceed without progress on Palestinian statehood.

Second, there is no role for Hamas in a future Palestinian state.

Hamas is a terrorist organisation which has the explicit intent of the destruction of the state of Israel and the Jewish people.

Hamas also rains terror on the Palestinian people.

Recognising a Palestinian state – one that can only exist side by side with a secure Israel – not only offers the Palestinian people an opportunity to realise their aspirations, it also strengthens the forces for peace at the expense of Hamas.

And it is the only hope to break the endless cycle of violence.

Australia's diplomacy and decisions are focused on helping advance this lasting peace – which is what we have always said we would do.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

There is a need to acknowledge the real trauma on all sides, to acknowledge each other's humanity, and to come together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

That is also the approach I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

Many amongst us increasingly struggle to discuss this conflict without condemning their fellow citizens.

This imperils our democracy. We have to keep listening to each other; respecting each other.

But I have heard language demonstrating that people are losing respect for each other's humanity.

Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

I've heard people who claim to represent one perspective, diminishing the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

And it's not ok to excuse egregious acts, just because they're done by your side.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by insisting on respective absolutes.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other and our right to live in peace.

Yet there are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

The Greens political party is willing to amplify disinformation, exploiting distress for votes.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

At the same time, Mr Dutton reflexively dismisses concern for Palestinians as " Hamas sympathising."

On this, and in his approach to the world, Mr Dutton needs to decide if he wants to be a leader in difficult times - or if he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

The Australian people already decided at the last election that we need more than a cartoonish parody of toughness that left Australia with fewer friends, less credibility and less trust.

Australians know our country needs mature leadership for serious times.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

The Albanese Government is applied to the challenges Australia faces in our region and the world, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

Because this is the only way to advance Australia's interests in a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous.

A region free of hegemony.

A region in balance.

Where countries, large and small, have the freedom to decide our own futures.

Where we operate by the same rules, and we have space to agree and to disagree.

Securing our region today requires modernising the legacies of Curtin, Whitlam and Evatt, prioritising alliance, region and rules.

Starting with the alliance, which has only grown in strength and depth in the past two years. The United States is our closest ally, and principal strategic partner.

The Indo-Pacific would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States and its security guarantee to the region.

As I have said before, American leadership remains indispensable – it is the great builder of alliances and networks, essential for balance in a multipolar region.

I know that will be the case in the future, as it has been for many decades past. We will continue to work closely with whoever is elected by the American people as US President.

We also know we cannot expect the US to secure our future for us.

Our investment in our region is key to our efforts to build our collective resilience and sovereignty.

This year we have hosted the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in March. [look forward to Quad]

Through the Melbourne Declaration, ASEAN and Australia's leaders reaffirmed ASEAN's central role in fostering peace and enhancing mutual trust among countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

We are building shared prosperity with Southeast Asia, including through Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040.

Australia is investing in the Pacific like never before.

Guided by the needs of our Pacific partners and the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia is investing in the Pacific, including in sport, climate finance, policing and maritime cooperation.

The Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union embodies our approach to partnership.

It is the biggest step Australia has taken with a Pacific country since the independence of Papua New Guinea nearly 50 years ago.

Central to being a partner of choice in our region is rebuilding funding for our development and humanitarian programs.

We have released Australia's first development policy in almost a decade, and are succeeding in listening carefully and responding to the needs of our partners with genuine and credible options.

We recognise we live in a more contested region, and we have to work harder to be a partner of choice. The opportunity to be the only partner of choice was lost to us.

We also recognise that stabilising our relationship with China has not only helped rebuild our credibility and influence with our regional partners, but has also enabled Australia to speak directly to China's leadership about issues that matter.

We are taking forward regular ministerial engagement with China.

Some imply that there is something to be gained in limiting contact with China.

The reality is that China is the world's second largest economy, representing 17% of the world's GDP. China's growth story has been a crucial driver of prosperity in Australia, in our region and in the world.

There is no doubt that China will play a pivotal role as it seeks to reshape its region and assert himself. Advancing our interests requires engagement.

Our efforts so far have seen impediments lifted on around \$19 billion worth of Australian exports, by 2019 figures, and we continue to press for outstanding impediments to be resolved.

It is worrying that incursions by Chinese aircraft in the Taiwan Strait have become a routine event. The risk of an accident, and potential escalation, is growing.

Australia's longstanding and bipartisan position is to oppose unilateral changes to the status quo. We call for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues through dialogue without the threat or use of force or coercion.

Some may say this is insufficient in the circumstances that we face. But I would invite reflection on the alternative.

Since I became Foreign Minister, I have strongly supported US calls for open lines of communication with China.

We welcome the resumption of leader-level and military-level dialogue between the United States and China as important steps on the path towards stability that the region has called for.

This is also a reminder of the role militaries must play in reassurance, as well as deterrence.

The circumstances we face only reinforces the need for militaries to be in contact.

And that the need for new preventive architecture has only grown, to fortify the region's existing security arrangements, and to promote transparency and reassurance.

As military capabilities grow, we know that a level of transparency is expected from our region and our partners – just as we expect transparency of others.

This is how our government has sought to engage our partners at every step of the AUKUS agreement with the United States and the United Kingdom.

[placeholder for AUKUS announcement]

We are committed to AUKUS meeting the highest non-proliferation standard.

The IAEA DG Grossi has welcomed our continued openness and transparency. We look forward to our co-presidency of the IAEA's International Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna next month.

The Albanese Government takes forward the Labor tradition of promoting a world without nuclear weapons and a commitment to international organisations.

Because Australia knows the international rules and norms are a deterrent to conflict that underpin our security and prosperity.

All of efforts are for the ultimate goal – to avert conflict, and sustain peace.

They provide reassurance to persuade all countries that their interests are best served by peace, and deterrence, to ensure that the costs of aggression continue to outweigh the benefits.

Often, security discourses have artificially divided actions to reassure and to deter.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that limits our potency when we have to maximise all the tools of national power.

As recognised in the Defence Strategic Review, any lever in any domain that creates an unacceptably high cost can serve as a credible deterrent.

In this way, deterrence is an important lens to view trade and investment – where benefits of economic interdependence carry with them the potential costs of disruption.

Economic integration provides a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

And I already mentioned the rules as an important deterrent. That's why multilateral engagement in international organisations like the UN is a core national interest, too often dismissed by some.

These organisations are where the rules are decided and peace is defended. As the saying goes, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

And I want to make this point about diplomacy –building coalitions, reducing tensions, resolving disputes.

Diplomacy frames the calculus that each country faces, and signals intent – an important deterrent.

And our diplomacy is underwritten by our military capability.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles said last week that deterring conflict in today's environment requires a new approach – one that harnesses all elements of our national power.

The new concept of National Defence, underpinning the inaugural National Defence Strategy, comprehends that our nation's front line is diplomacy.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs of those that would seek to coerce us.

Indeed in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into diplomacy and engagement, the risk of military capabilities being called into service is greater.

CONCLUSION

We need to deploy all these levers – all these arms of statecraft applied together - at home and in our engagement with the world.

Contributing to a region guided by rules...

Contributing to a region where we resolve disputes through dialogue...

Contributing to a region in balance, where the cost of destabilisation - the cost of conflict - is just not worth it for any would-be aggressor.

It's not enough to talk tough. Belligerence earns us nothing but eyerolls.

It is through our actions, through credible and comprehensive reassurance and deterrence, by building our resilience, that we secure our future, prosperous at home and confident in the world.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Thank you Vice Chancellor Bell for hosting us this evening, and to Chelsea our MC. Rory, thank you for your introduction.

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would like to acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues, including the Treasurer Jim Chalmers, Attorney General Mark Dreyfus and Shadow Defence Minister Andrew Hastie.

I would also like to acknowledge the senior public servants and members of the defence force here this evening. I thank you for your service.

And the members of the diplomatic corps - thank you all for being here.

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

Our people have an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

A pluralist nation, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia’s connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, through travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our rich heritage: drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and families of more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset. It gives us perspective, wisdom and experience that we now apply in securing our future in the Indo-Pacific.

We know our choices can make a difference in the world and what happens in the world makes a difference to us.

We know the costs of war, and the value of peace.

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

We want to maintain peace.

And we want a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and disagree.

We want each country – large or small – to operate by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, by contributing our efforts the balance of our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by working with our friends and partners to combine reassurance and deterrence, so no potential aggressor thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the UNSC Committee Panel of Experts on the DPRK after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, including illegal arms transfers to Russia.

The political, humanitarian and security situation in Myanmar continues to worsen, with far-reaching implications for our region and its people, including the Rohingya.

China's vessels have used water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew in the South China Sea.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at risk.

In December, ASEAN Foreign Ministers spoke about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their concern over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

The existing system of rules and norms is already under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not evolved in turn.

The inability to reach agreement in so many fora means that a collective approach to counter these grayzone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

And all together, these factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades – with a higher degree of risk that miscalculation could lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today.

I've mentioned Ukraine, who continue to heroically fight for their homeland against Russia's flagrant breach of the UN Charter.

Australia is resolute in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

And we are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

On October 7, Israel was brutally attacked by Hamas.

Not only was this the greatest loss of Jewish life in a single day since the Holocaust, Hamas continues to hold x hostages.

Australia remains steadfast in our call for the immediate and unconditional release of remaining hostages – families of whom I met with in Israel earlier this year.

Any country under attack by Hamas would defend itself.

And in defending itself, every country is bound by the same rules.

Israel must comply with international humanitarian law.

It must make major and immediate changes to the conduct of its military campaign, to protect civilians.

It must comply with the binding ruling of the International Court of Justice, including to enable the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance at scale.

Yet six months into this conflict, more than one million Palestinians are starving.

More than 32,000 [x] have been killed; xyz women and children; 194 aid workers, including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

This is why so many countries, including Australia, have called on the Netanyahu Government to change course.

When the steadfastly pro-Israel President Biden cautions that Mr Netanyahu "is hurting Israel more than helping"...

And when Senator Schumer, who acknowledges himself as the highest-ranking Jewish-American ever elected, expresses concern that "Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world"...

It is in Israel's own interest that the Netanyahu Government responds to the demands of the international community.

Anyone who considers themselves a friend of Israel should be making that point.

In addition to our demand for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, enabling the release of hostages, the protection of civilians, and safe and unimpeded humanitarian access...

We need to build the pathway out of the endless cycle of violence.

We need to build the pathway to a peace that is enduring, and just.

The premise has to be acknowledgement of each other's right to exist.

Because the simple truth is that a secure and prosperous future for both Israelis and Palestinians will only come with a two-state solution. A Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

Prime Minister Netanyahu has said he won't relinquish full security control over territory west of Jordan, and I quote, "*this is contrary to a Palestinian state*".

We are now thirty years on from the Oslo Accords that put Palestinian statehood at the end of a process.

There is widespread frustration with the failure of this approach - and frustration with the refusal of the Netanyahu Government to engage on the question.

So international momentum is now building to recognise Palestinian statehood as a way to lock in progress toward the required two-state solution.

As British Foreign Secretary Cameron has said, has said the UK "*will look at the issue of recognising a Palestinian state, including at the United Nations*". He said this could make the two-state solution "*irreversible*".

There are always those who claim recognition is rewarding the enemy.

This is wrong for two reasons.

First, Israel's own security depends on a two-state solution.

There is no long-term security for Israel unless it is recognised by the countries of its region.

But the normalisation agenda that was being pursued before October 7 cannot proceed without progress on Palestinian statehood.

Saudi Arabia has made clear "*there will be no diplomatic relations with Israel unless an independent Palestinian state is recognized*".

Second, there is no role for Hamas in a future Palestinian state.

Hamas is a terrorist organisation which has the explicit intent of the destruction of the state of Israel and the Jewish people.

Hamas also rains terror on the Palestinian people.

Recognising a Palestinian state – one that can only exist side by side with a secure Israel – not only offers the Palestinian people an opportunity to realise their aspirations, it also strengthens the forces for peace at the expense of Hamas.

And it is the only hope to break the endless cycle of violence.

Australia's diplomacy and decisions are focused on helping advance this lasting peace – which is what we have always said we would do.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

There is a need to acknowledge the real trauma on all sides, to acknowledge each other's humanity, and to come together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

That is also the approach I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

Many amongst us increasingly struggle to discuss this conflict without condemning their fellow citizens.

This imperils our democracy. We have to keep listening to each other; respecting each other.

But I have heard language demonstrating that people are losing respect for each other's humanity.

Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

I've heard people who claim to represent one perspective, diminishing the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

And it's not ok to excuse egregious acts, just because they're done by your side.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by insisting on respective absolutes.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other and our right to live in peace.

Yet there are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

The Greens political party is willing to amplify disinformation, exploiting distress in a transparent and cynical play for votes.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

At the same time, Mr Dutton reflexively dismisses concern for Palestinians as “ Hamas sympathising.”

On this, and in his approach to the world, Mr Dutton needs to decide if he wants to be a leader in difficult times - or if he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

The Australian people already decided at the last election that we need more than tough talk that nobody took seriously, and belligerence that left Australia with fewer friends, less credibility and less trust.

Australians know our country needs mature leadership for serious times.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

The Albanese Government is applied to the challenges Australia faces in our region and the world, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

Because this is the only way to advance Australia’s interests in a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous.

A region free of hegemony.

A region in balance.

Where countries, large and small, have the freedom to decide our own futures.

Where we operate by the same rules, and we have space to agree and to disagree.

Securing our region today requires modernising the legacies of Curtin, Whitlam and Evatt, prioritising alliance, region and rules.

Starting with the alliance, which has only grown in strength and depth in the past two years. The United States is our closest ally, and principal strategic partner.

The Indo-Pacific would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States and its security guarantee to the region.

As I have said before, American leadership remains indispensable – it is the great builder of alliances and networks, essential for balance in a multipolar region.

I know that will be the case in the future, as it has been for many decades past. We will continue to work closely with whoever is elected by the American people as US President.

This does not abrogate our own responsibilities. We know we cannot expect the US to secure our future for us.

Which brings me to my next priority – the region we live in.

Since day one, we have been investing in our region and our relationships, to build our collective resilience and sovereignty.

This year alone we have hosted the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in March.

Through the Melbourne Declaration, ASEAN and Australia's leaders reaffirmed ASEAN's central role in fostering peace and enhancing mutual trust among countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

We are building shared prosperity with Southeast Asia, including through Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040.

Our Quad partnership with India, Japan and the United States is listening to the priorities and responding to the needs of regional partners, while respecting the enduring leadership of ASEAN, IORA and the Pacific Islands Forum.

And Australia is investing more than ever in the Pacific.

Guided by the needs of our Pacific partners and the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia is investing in people, sport, climate finance, policing and maritime cooperation.

The Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union embodies our approach to partnership.

It is the biggest step Australia has taken with a Pacific country since the independence of Papua New Guinea nearly 50 years ago.

We have released Australia's first development policy in almost a decade and are rebuilding our development and humanitarian programs.

Through these and other investments, we are working to help our partners become more economically resilient, develop critical infrastructure and provide their own security, so they have less need to call on others.

We recognise we live in a more contested region, and we have to work harder to be a trusted partner of choice. The opportunity to be the only partner of choice in the Pacific was lost to us over the previous decade.

Being a partner of choice relies on being mature and credible.

Stabilising our relationship with China has not only helped rebuild our credibility with our regional partners, but it has also enabled Australia to speak directly to China's leadership about issues that matter.

We are taking forward regular ministerial engagement with China.

Some imply that there is something to be gained in limiting contact with China.

The reality is that China is the world's second largest economy, representing 17% of the world's GDP. China's growth story has been a crucial driver of prosperity in Australia, in our region and in the world.

There is no doubt that China will play a pivotal role as it seeks to reshape its region and assert himself. Advancing our interests requires engagement.

Our efforts so far have seen impediments lifted on around \$19 billion worth of Australian exports, by 2019 figures, and we continue to press for outstanding impediments to be resolved.

It is worrying that incursions by Chinese aircraft in the Taiwan Strait have become a routine event. The risk of an accident, and potential escalation, is growing.

Australia's longstanding and bipartisan position is to oppose unilateral changes to the status quo. We call for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues through dialogue without the threat or use of force or coercion.

Some may say this is insufficient in the circumstances that we face. But I would invite reflection on the alternative.

Australia is always working for peace. And for us, our third priority, is upholding and strengthening the rules that work to prevent conflict.

Since I became Foreign Minister, I have consistently called for open lines of communication between the great powers.

We welcome the resumption of leader-level and military-level dialogue between the United States and China as important steps on the path towards stability that the region has called for.

This is also a reminder of the role militaries must play in reassurance, as well as deterrence.

The circumstances we face only reinforce the need for militaries to be in contact.

And that the need for new preventive architecture and conflict prevention measures has only grown, to fortify the region's existing security arrangements, and to promote transparency and reassurance.

This is how our government has sought to engage our partners at every step of the AUKUS agreement with the United States and the United Kingdom.

[placeholder for AUKUS announcement]

We are committed to AUKUS meeting the highest non-proliferation standard.

The IAEA DG Grossi has welcomed our continued openness and transparency. We look forward to our co-presidency of the IAEA's International Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna next month.

The Albanese Government takes forward the Labor tradition of promoting a world without nuclear weapons and a commitment to international organisations.

Because Australia knows the international rules and norms are a deterrent to conflict that underpin our security and prosperity.

All of efforts – through the alliance, region and rules – are for the ultimate goal – to avert conflict, build prosperity and sustain the kind of peace we want.

They provide reassurance to persuade all countries that their interests are best served by peace, and deterrence, to ensure that the costs of aggression continue to outweigh the benefits.

Often, security discourses have artificially divided actions to reassure and to deter.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that limits our potency when we have to maximise all the tools of national power.

As recognised in the Defence Strategic Review, any lever in any domain that creates an unacceptably high cost can serve as a credible deterrent.

In this way, deterrence is an important lens to view trade and investment – where benefits of economic interdependence carry with them the potential costs of disruption.

Economic integration provides a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

And I already mentioned the rules as an important deterrent. That's why multilateral engagement in international organisations like the UN is a core national interest, too often dismissed by some.

These organisations are where the rules are decided and peace is defended. As the saying goes, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

And I want to make this point about diplomacy – which builds coalitions, reduces tensions, resolves disputes.

Diplomacy frames the calculus that each country faces, and signals intent. It is an important deterrent.

The new concept of National Defence, underpinning the inaugural National Defence Strategy, comprehends that our nation's front line is diplomacy.

And our diplomacy is underwritten by our military capability.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles made this point last week: that deterring conflict in today's environment requires a new approach – one that harnesses all elements of our national power.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs for those who would seek to coerce us.

Indeed, in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into diplomacy and engagement, the risk of military capabilities being called into service is greater.

CONCLUSION – UNDER REVIEW

because that is what we are seeking to secure. It's what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We need to deploy all these levers – all these arms of statecraft applied together - at home and in our engagement with the world.

Contributing to a region guided by rules...

Contributing to a region where we resolve disputes through dialogue...

Contributing to a region in balance, where the cost of destabilisation - the cost of conflict - is just not worth it for any would-be aggressor.

It is through our actions, through credible and comprehensive reassurance and deterrence, by building our resilience, that we secure our future, prosperous at home and confident in the world.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Thank you Vice Chancellor Bell for hosting us this evening, and to Chelsea our MC. Rory, thank you for your introduction.

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would like to acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues, including the Treasurer Jim Chalmers, Attorney General Mark Dreyfus and Shadow Defence Minister Andrew Hastie.

I would also like to acknowledge the senior public servants and members of the defence force here this evening. I thank you for your service.

And the members of the diplomatic corps - thank you all for being here.

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

Our people have an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

A pluralist nation, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia’s connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, through travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our rich heritage: drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and families of more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset. It gives us perspective, wisdom and experience that we now apply in securing our future in the Indo-Pacific.

We know our choices can make a difference in the world and what happens in the world makes a difference to us.

We know the costs of war, and the value of peace.

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

We want to maintain peace.

And we want a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and disagree.

We want each country – large or small – to operate by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed according to the rules, and by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, by contributing our efforts the balance of our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by responding, when we, or our neighbours, are coerced or have sovereignty threatened.

We do this by working with our friends and partners to combine reassurance and deterrence, so no potential aggressor thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the UNSC Committee Panel of Experts on the DPRK after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, threatening our friends in the Republic of Korea and Japan, and conducting illegal arms transfers to Russia.

The political, humanitarian and security situation in Myanmar continues to worsen, with far-reaching implications for our region and its people, including the Rohingya.

China's vessels are using water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew in the South China Sea.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at risk.

In December, ASEAN Foreign Ministers spoke about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their concern over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

The existing system of rules and norms is under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not evolved in turn.

The inability to reach agreement in so many fora means that a collective approach to counter grayzone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

And all together, these factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades – with a higher degree of risk that miscalculation could lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today.

I've mentioned Ukraine, whose people continue to heroically fight for their homeland against Russia's flagrant breach of the UN Charter.

Australia is resolute in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

And we are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

On October 7, Israel was brutally attacked by Hamas.

Not only was this the greatest loss of Jewish life in a single day since the Holocaust, Hamas continues to hold x hostages.

Australia remains steadfast in our call for the immediate and unconditional release of remaining hostages – families of whom I met with in Israel earlier this year.

Any country under attack by Hamas would defend itself.

And in defending itself, every country is bound by the same rules.

Israel must comply with international humanitarian law.

It must make major and immediate changes to the conduct of its military campaign, to protect civilians.

It must comply with the binding ruling of the International Court of Justice, including to enable the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance at scale.

Yet six months into this conflict, more than one million Palestinians are starving.

More than 32,000 [x] have been killed; xyz women and children; 194 aid workers, including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

This is why so many countries, including Australia, have called on the Netanyahu Government to change course.

When the steadfastly pro-Israel President Biden cautions that Mr Netanyahu "is hurting Israel more than helping"...

And when Senator Schumer, who acknowledges himself as the highest-ranking Jewish-American ever elected, expresses concern that "Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world"...

It is in Israel's own interest that the Netanyahu Government responds to the demands of the international community.

Anyone who considers themselves a friend of Israel should be making that point.

In addition to our demand for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, enabling the release of hostages, the protection of civilians, and safe and unimpeded humanitarian access...

We need to build the pathway out of the endless cycle of violence.

We need to build the pathway to a peace that is enduring, and just.

The premise has to be acknowledgement of each other's right to exist.

Because the simple truth is that a secure and prosperous future for both Israelis and Palestinians will only come with a two-state solution. A Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

Prime Minister Netanyahu has said he won't relinquish full security control over territory west of Jordan, and I quote, *"this is contrary to a Palestinian state"*.

We are now thirty years on from the Oslo Accords that put Palestinian statehood at the end of a process.

There is widespread frustration with the failure of this approach - and frustration with the refusal of the Netanyahu Government to engage on the question.

So international momentum is now building to recognise Palestinian statehood as a way to lock in progress toward the required two-state solution.

As British Foreign Secretary Cameron has said, the UK *"will look at the issue of recognising a Palestinian state, including at the United Nations"*. He said this could make the two-state solution *"irreversible"*.

There are always those who claim recognition is rewarding the enemy.

This is wrong for two reasons.

First, Israel's own security depends on a two-state solution.

There is no long-term security for Israel unless it is recognised by the countries of its region.

But the normalisation agenda that was being pursued before October 7 cannot proceed without progress on Palestinian statehood.

Saudi Arabia has made clear *"there will be no diplomatic relations with Israel unless an independent Palestinian state is recognized"*.

Second, there is no role for Hamas in a future Palestinian state.

Hamas is a terrorist organisation which has the explicit intent of the destruction of the state of Israel and the Jewish people.

Hamas also rains terror on the Palestinian people.

Recognising a Palestinian state – one that can only exist side by side with a secure Israel – not only offers the Palestinian people an opportunity to realise their aspirations, it also strengthens the forces for peace at the expense of Hamas.

And it is the only hope to break the endless cycle of violence.

Australia's diplomacy and decisions are focused on helping advance this lasting peace – which is what we have always said we would do.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

There is a need to acknowledge the real trauma on all sides, to acknowledge each other's humanity, and to come together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

That is also the approach I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

Many amongst us increasingly struggle to discuss this conflict without condemning their fellow citizens.

This imperils our democracy. We have to keep listening to each other; respecting each other.

But I have heard language demonstrating that people are losing respect for each other's humanity.

Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

I've heard people who claim to represent one perspective, diminishing the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

And it's not ok to excuse egregious acts, just because they're done by your side.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by insisting on respective absolutes.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other and our right to live in peace.

Yet there are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

The Greens political party is willing to amplify disinformation, exploiting distress in a transparent and cynical play for votes.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

At the same time, Mr Dutton reflexively dismisses concern for Palestinians as “ Hamas sympathising.”

On this, and in his approach to the world, Mr Dutton needs to decide if he wants to be a leader in difficult times - or if he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

The Australian people already decided at the last election that we need more than tough talk that nobody took seriously, and belligerence that left Australia with fewer friends, less credibility and less trust.

Australians know our country needs mature leadership for serious times.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

The Albanese Government is applied to the challenges Australia faces in our region and the world, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

Because this is the only way to advance Australia’s interests in a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous.

A region free of hegemony.

A region in balance.

Where countries, large and small, have the freedom to decide our own futures.

Where we operate by the same rules, and we have space to agree and to disagree.

Securing our region today requires modernising the legacies of Curtin, Whitlam and Evatt, prioritising alliance, region and rules.

Starting with the alliance, which has only grown in strength and depth in the past two years. The United States is our closest ally, our principal strategic partner and our largest source of foreign investment.

The Indo-Pacific would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States and its security guarantee to the region.

As I have said before, American leadership remains indispensable – it is the great builder of alliances and networks, essential for balance in a multipolar region.

I know that will be the case in the future, as it has been for many decades past. We will continue to work closely with whoever is elected by the American people as US President.

This does not abrogate our own responsibilities. We know we cannot expect the US to secure our future for us.

Which brings me to my next priority – the region we live in.

Since day one, we have been investing in our region and our relationships, to build our collective resilience and sovereignty.

This year alone we have hosted the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in March.

Through the Melbourne Declaration, ASEAN and Australia's leaders reaffirmed ASEAN's central role in fostering peace and enhancing mutual trust among countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

We are building shared prosperity with Southeast Asia, including through Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040.

Our Quad partnership with India, Japan and the United States is listening to the priorities and responding to the needs of regional partners, while respecting the enduring leadership of ASEAN, IORA and the Pacific Islands Forum.

And Australia is investing more than ever in the Pacific.

Guided by the needs of our Pacific partners and the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia is investing in people, sport, climate finance, policing and maritime cooperation.

The Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union embodies our approach to partnership.

It is the biggest step Australia has taken with a Pacific country since the independence of Papua New Guinea nearly 50 years ago.

We have released Australia's first development policy in almost a decade and are rebuilding our development and humanitarian programs.

Through these and other investments, we are working to help our partners become more economically resilient, develop critical infrastructure and provide their own security, so they have less need to call on others.

We recognise we live in a more contested region, and we have to work harder to be a trusted partner of choice. The opportunity to be the only partner of choice in the Pacific was lost to us over the previous decade.

Being a partner of choice relies on being mature and credible.

Stabilising our relationship with China has not only helped rebuild our credibility with our regional partners, but it has also enabled Australia to speak directly to China's leadership about issues that matter.

We are taking forward regular ministerial engagement with China.

Some imply that there is something to be gained in limiting contact with China.

The reality is that China is the world's second largest economy, representing 17% of the world's GDP. China's growth story has been a crucial driver of prosperity in Australia, in our region and in the world.

There is no doubt that China will play a pivotal role as it seeks to reshape its region and assert himself. Advancing our interests requires engagement.

Our efforts so far have seen impediments lifted on around \$19 billion worth of Australian exports, by 2019 figures, and we continue to press for outstanding impediments to be resolved.

It is worrying that incursions by Chinese aircraft in the Taiwan Strait have become a routine event. The risk of an accident, and potential escalation, is growing.

Australia's longstanding and bipartisan position is to oppose unilateral changes to the status quo. We call for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues through dialogue without the threat or use of force or coercion.

Some may say this is insufficient in the circumstances that we face. But I would invite reflection on the alternative.

Australia is always working for peace. And for us, our third priority, is upholding and strengthening the rules that work to prevent conflict.

Since I became Foreign Minister, I have consistently called for open lines of communication between the great powers.

We welcome the resumption of leader-level and military-level dialogue between the United States and China as important steps on the path towards stability that the region has called for.

This is also a reminder of the role militaries must play in reassurance, as well as deterrence.

The circumstances we face only reinforce the need for militaries to be in contact.

And that the need for new preventive architecture and conflict prevention measures has only grown, to fortify the region's existing security arrangements, and to promote transparency and reassurance.

This is how our government has sought to engage our partners at every step of the AUKUS agreement with the United States and the United Kingdom.

Today we announced that the AUKUS partners are considering cooperation with Japan on AUKUS Pillar II advanced capability projects.

We are committed to AUKUS meeting the highest non-proliferation standard.

The IAEA DG Grossi has welcomed our continued openness and transparency. We look forward to our co-presidency of the IAEA's International Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna next month.

The Albanese Government takes forward the Labor tradition of promoting a world without nuclear weapons and a commitment to international organisations.

Because Australia knows the international rules and norms are a deterrent to conflict that underpin our security and prosperity.

All of efforts – through the alliance, region and rules – are for the ultimate goal: to avert conflict, build prosperity and sustain the kind of peace we want.

They provide reassurance to persuade all countries that their interests are best served by peace, and deterrence, to ensure that the costs of aggression continue to outweigh the benefits.

Often, security discourses have artificially divided actions to reassure and to deter.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that limits our potency when we have to maximise all the tools of national power.

As recognised in the Defence Strategic Review, any lever in any domain that creates an unacceptably high cost can serve as a credible deterrent.

In this way, trade and investment has an important deterrent effect.

Economic integration provides a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

We have already seen economic interdependence be misused for strategic and political ends.

And I already mentioned the rules as an important deterrent. This includes the international trade rules, which create a level playing field.

That's why multilateral engagement in international organisations like the UN is a core national interest, too often dismissed by some.

These organisations are where nations come together to decide the rules and defend the peace. As the saying goes, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

And I want to make this point about diplomacy – which builds coalitions, reduces tensions, resolves disputes.

Diplomacy frames the calculus that each country faces, and signals intent. It is an important deterrent.

The new concept of National Defence, underpinning the inaugural National Defence Strategy, comprehends that our nation's front line is diplomacy.

And our diplomacy is underwritten by our military capability.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles made this point last week: that deterring conflict in today's environment requires a new approach – one that harnesses all elements of our national power.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs for those who would seek to coerce us.

Indeed, in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into diplomacy and engagement, the risk of military capabilities being called into service is greater.

CONCLUSION – UNDER REVIEW

We need to deploy all these levers – all these arms of statecraft applied together - at home and in our engagement with the world.

Australia will always be better off in a region and a world guided by rules

because that is what we are seeking to secure. It's what our foreign policy projects and protects.

Contributing to a region guided by rules...

Contributing to a region where we resolve disputes through dialogue...

Contributing to a region in balance, where the cost of destabilisation - the cost of conflict - is just not worth it for any would-be aggressor.

It is through our actions, through credible and comprehensive reassurance and deterrence, by building our resilience, that we secure our future, prosperous at home and confident in the world.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Thank you Vice Chancellor Bell for hosting us this evening, and to Chelsea our MC. Rory, thank you for your introduction.

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would like to acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues, including the Treasurer Jim Chalmers, Attorney General Mark Dreyfus and Shadow Defence Minister Andrew Hastie.

I would also like to acknowledge the senior public servants and members of the defence force here this evening. I thank you for your service.

And the members of the diplomatic corps - thank you all for being here.

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

Our people have an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

A pluralist nation, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia’s connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, through travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our rich heritage: drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and families of more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset. It gives us perspective, wisdom and experience that we now apply in securing our future in the Indo-Pacific.

We know our choices can make a difference in the world and what happens in the world makes a difference to us.

We know the costs of war, and the value of peace.

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

We want to maintain peace.

And we want a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and disagree.

We want each country – large or small – to operate by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed according to the rules, and by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, and by contributing our efforts to the balance of power in our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by responding, when we, or our neighbours, are coerced or have sovereignty threatened.

We do this by combining reassurance and deterrence – by working with our friends and partners, openly and transparently, so no potential aggressor thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the UNSC Committee Panel of Experts on the DPRK after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, conducting illegal arms transfers to Russia and threatening our region, including our friends in the Republic of Korea and Japan.

The political, humanitarian and security situation in Myanmar continues to worsen, with far-reaching implications for our region and its people, including the Rohingya.

China's vessels are using water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew in the South China Sea.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at risk.

In December, ASEAN Foreign Ministers spoke about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their concern over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

The existing system of rules and norms is under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not evolved in turn.

The inability to reach agreement in so many fora means that a collective approach to counter grey zone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

And all together, these factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades – with a higher degree of risk that miscalculation could lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today.

I've mentioned Ukraine, whose people continue to heroically fight for their homeland against Russia's flagrant breach of the UN Charter.

Australia is resolute in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

And we are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

On October 7, Israel was brutally attacked by Hamas.

The greatest loss of Jewish life in a single day since the Holocaust.

Hamas killed 1,200 people, including Australian grandmother Galit Carbone - and continues to hold 134 hostages.

Australia remains steadfast in our call for the immediate and unconditional release of remaining hostages – families of whom I have met both in Israel and Australia.

Any country under attack by Hamas would defend itself.

And in defending itself, every country is bound by the same fundamental rules.

Israel must comply with international humanitarian law.

It must make major and immediate changes to the conduct of its military campaign, to protect civilians, journalists and aid workers.

It must comply with the binding orders of the International Court of Justice, including to enable the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance at scale.

Six months on from October 7, well over one million Palestinians in Gaza are at risk of starvation.

More than 33,000 Palestinians have been killed, including many thousands of women and children.

196 aid workers have been killed, including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

Hamas is a terrorist organisation. It has no respect for international law.

Democracies seek and accept higher standards.

This is why Australia and so many countries have called on the Netanyahu Government to change course, including in respect of a major ground offensive in Rafah. Again we say, do not go down this path.

When President Biden cautions that Mr Netanyahu “*is hurting Israel more than helping*”...

And when Senator Schumer expresses concern that “*Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world*”...

It is in Israel’s own interest that the Netanyahu Government responds to the demands of the international community.

Anyone who considers themselves a friend of Israel should be making that point.

In addition to our demand on all parties for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, enabling the release of hostages, the protection of civilians, and safe and unimpeded humanitarian access...

We need to build the pathway out of the endless cycle of violence.

We need to build the pathway to a peace that is enduring, and just.

Because the simple truth is that a secure and prosperous future for both Israelis and Palestinians will only come with a two-state solution. Recognition of each other’s right to exist. A Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

We are now thirty years on from the Oslo Accords that put Palestinian statehood at the end of a process.

The failures of this approach by all parties over decades - as well as the Netanyahu Government’s refusal to even engage on the question of a Palestinian state - have caused widespread frustration.

So the international community is now considering the question of Palestinian statehood as a way of building momentum towards a two-state solution.

As British Foreign Secretary Cameron has said the UK “*will look at the issue of recognising a Palestinian state, including at the United Nations*”. He said this could make the two-state solution “*irreversible*”.

There are always those who claim recognition is rewarding an enemy.

This is wrong.

First, because Israel’s own security depends on a two-state solution.

There is no long-term security for Israel unless it is recognised by the countries of its region.

But the normalisation agenda that was being pursued before October 7 cannot proceed without progress on Palestinian statehood.

Saudi Arabia has made clear *“there will be no diplomatic relations with Israel unless an independent Palestinian state is recognized”*.

Second, because there is no role for Hamas in a future Palestinian state. Hamas is a terrorist organisation which has the explicit intent of the destruction of the state of Israel and the Jewish people.

And it should be acknowledged that Hamas also rains terror on the Palestinian people in Gaza.

It has long been understood that any future Palestinian state cannot be in a position to threaten Israel’s security and will need a reformed Palestinian Authority.

Recognising a Palestinian state – one that can only exist side by side with a secure Israel – doesn’t just offer the Palestinian people an opportunity to realise their aspirations.

It also strengthens the forces for peace, and undermines extremism. It undermines Hamas, Iran and Iran’s other destructive proxies in the region.

A two-state solution is the only hope to break the endless cycle of violence.

This is why we are urging all parties to return to the table and support all efforts to advance a political process, including discussions between regional leaders.

Australia’s diplomacy and decisions are focused on helping advance this lasting peace – which is what we have always said we would do.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

There is a need to acknowledge the real trauma on all sides, to acknowledge each other’s humanity, and to come together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

That is also the approach I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

It is disheartening to witness the number of Australians that increasingly struggle to discuss this conflict without condemning their fellow citizens.

This imperils our democracy. We have to keep listening to each other; respecting each other.

But I have heard language demonstrating that people are losing respect for each other’s humanity.

Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

I’ve heard people who claim to represent one perspective, diminishing the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

And it's not ok to excuse egregious acts, just because they're done by people whose views you share.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by shouting each other down and by insisting on respective absolutes.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other and our right to live in peace.

Yet there are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

The Greens political party is willing to purposely amplifying disinformation, exploiting distress in a blatant and cynical play for votes. With no regard for the social disharmony they are fuelling.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

At the same time, Mr Dutton reflexively dismisses concern for Palestinians as "Hamas sympathising."

On this, and in his approach to the world, Mr Dutton needs to decide if he wants to be a leader in difficult times - or if he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

Australians know our country needs mature leadership for serious times.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

The Albanese Government is meeting the challenges Australia faces in our region and the world, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

Because this is the only way to advance Australia's interests in a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous.

A region free of hegemony.

A region in balance.

Where countries, large and small, have the freedom to decide our own futures.

Where we operate by the same rules, and we have space to agree and to disagree.

Securing our region today requires modernising the legacies of Curtin, Whitlam and Evatt, prioritising alliance, region and rules.

Starting with the alliance, which has only grown in strength and depth in the past two years.

The United States is our closest ally, our principal strategic partner and our largest source of foreign investment.

We share values and ideals, and our alliance is underpinned by mutual respect for each others' sovereignty and national interests.

The Indo-Pacific would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States and its security guarantee to the region.

As I have said before, American leadership remains indispensable – it is the great builder of alliances and networks, essential for balance in a multipolar region.

I know that will be the case in the future, as it has been for many decades past. We will continue to work closely with whoever is elected by the American people as US President.

But US leadership does not abrogate our own responsibility. We know we cannot expect the US to secure our future for us.

Which brings me to my next priority – the region we live in.

We take forward the Labor tradition of a defence and foreign policy anchored Asia and the Pacific.

Since day one of this government, we have been investing in our region and our relationships, to build our collective resilience and sovereignty.

This year alone we have hosted the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in March.

Through the Melbourne Declaration, ASEAN and Australia's leaders reaffirmed ASEAN's centrality in fostering peace and enhancing mutual trust among countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

We are building shared prosperity with Southeast Asia, including through Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040.

Our Quad partnership with India, Japan and the United States is listening and responding to the priorities of regional partners, while respecting the enduring leadership of ASEAN, IORA and the Pacific Islands Forum.

And Australia is investing more than ever in the Pacific.

Guided by the needs of our Pacific partners and the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia is boosting our support for sport, climate finance, policing and maritime cooperation.

The Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union embodies our approach to partnership.

It is the biggest step Australia has taken with a Pacific country since the independence of Papua New Guinea nearly 50 years ago.

We have released Australia's first international development policy in almost a decade, and are rebuilding our development and humanitarian programs.

Through these and other investments, we are working to help our partners become more economically resilient, develop critical infrastructure and provide their own security, so they have less need to call on others.

We recognise we live in a more contested region, and we have to work harder to be a trusted partner of choice. The opportunity to be the only partner of choice in the Pacific was lost to us over the previous decade.

Being a partner of choice relies on being mature and credible.

Stabilising our relationship with China has not only helped rebuild our credibility with our regional partners, but it has also enabled Australia to speak directly to China's leadership about issues that matter.

We are taking forward regular leader-level and ministerial engagement with China.

Some imply that there is something to be gained in limiting contact with China.

The reality is that China is the world's second largest economy, representing 17% of the world's GDP. China's growth story has been a crucial driver of prosperity in Australia, in our region and in the world.

China's size and weight makes it central to global challenges, from climate change to health. As a great power, China will continue to assert itself in reshaping the region and the world.

Advancing our interests requires engagement, and contrary to what some suggest, engagement does not imply concession..

Our efforts so far have seen impediments lifted on over \$19 billion of Australian exports, and we continue to press for outstanding impediments on around \$1 billion of exports to be resolved.

It is worrying that incursions by Chinese aircraft in the Taiwan Strait have become a routine event. The risk of an accident, and potential escalation, is growing.

Australia's longstanding and bipartisan position is to oppose unilateral changes to the status quo. We call for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues through dialogue without the threat or use of force or coercion.

Some may say this is insufficient in the circumstances that we face. But I would invite reflection on the alternative.

Australia is always working for peace. And for us, our third priority, is upholding and strengthening the rules that work to prevent conflict.

Since I became Foreign Minister, I have consistently called for open lines of communication between the great powers.

We welcome the resumption of leader-level and military-level dialogue between the United States and China as important steps on the path towards stability that the region has called for.

This is also a reminder of the role militaries must play in reassurance, as well as deterrence.

The circumstances we face only reinforce the need for militaries to be in contact.

And that the need for new preventive architecture and conflict prevention measures has only grown, to increase resilience and promote transparency and reassurance.

This is how our government has sought to engage our partners at every step of the AUKUS agreement with the United States and the United Kingdom.

Today we announced that the AUKUS partners are considering cooperation with Japan on AUKUS Pillar II advanced capability projects.

We are committed to AUKUS meeting the highest non-proliferation standard.

The IAEA DG Grossi has welcomed our continued openness and transparency. We look forward to our co-presidency of the IAEA's International Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna next month.

The Albanese Government is progressing the proud Labor commitment to a world without nuclear weapons.

Just as we carry forward the Labor commitment to international organisations, seeking to reform them for today's challenges and recognising that many developing countries are inadequately served by too much of the international system.

Because Australia knows that international rules and norms deter conflict and underpin our security and prosperity. We want everyone to have a voice.

All of our efforts – through the alliance, region and rules – are for the ultimate goal: to avert conflict, build prosperity and sustain the kind of peace we want.

Our efforts provide reassurance to persuade all countries that their interests are best served by peace, and deterrence, to ensure that the costs of aggression continue to outweigh the benefits.

Often, security discourses have artificially divided actions to reassure and to deter.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that limits our potency when we have to maximise all the tools of national power.

As recognised in the Defence Strategic Review, credible deterrence requires using all levers of statecraft to create an unacceptably high cost for any potential adversary.

The logic of the post-war economic order was to enable development and growth through openness.

And today, as then, economic integration provides a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

Economic interdependence can, as we know, also be misused for strategic and political ends.

And this is one way rules play an important role in deterrence – in this case international trade rules, which create a level playing field.

That's why multilateral engagement in international organisations like the UN is a core national interest, too often dismissed by some.

These organisations are where nations come together to decide the rules and defend the peace. As the saying goes, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

And I want to make this point about diplomacy – which in these forums and elsewhere, builds coalitions, reduces tensions, negotiates agreements and resolves disputes.

Diplomacy frames the calculus that each country faces, and signals intent, credibility and even red lines.

The new concept of National Defence, underpinning the inaugural National Defence Strategy, comprehends that as we seek to maintain peace in our region, our nation's front line is diplomacy.

And our diplomacy is underwritten by our military capability.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles made this point last week: that deterring conflict in today's environment requires a new approach – one that harnesses all elements of our national power.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs for those who would seek to coerce us.

Indeed, in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into diplomacy and engagement, the risk of military capabilities being called upon for conflict increases.

CONCLUSION

As international circumstances continue to go in the wrong direction, Australia's coordination of our military, diplomatic, strategic and economic power...

Our ability to reassure partners and to deter threats...

Becomes ever more important.

Our region is being reshaped.

And Australians know our choices and actions matter.

So we work with partners and friends to shape the region in our interests – contributing to the region's balance of power, so no country dominates and no country is dominated.

So we seek to be the credible and mature partner we expect other countries to be.

And I end where I began. Australians have always been connected to the world.

Through this connection we know what it is about Australia we need to project and what we need to protect.

A pluralist nation, welcoming, respectful, celebrating each other's rights and freedoms.

This is the nation whose future we seek to secure.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Thank you Vice Chancellor Bell for hosting us this evening, and to Chelsea our MC. Rory, thank you for your introduction.

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would like to acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues, including the Treasurer Jim Chalmers, Attorney General Mark Dreyfus and Shadow Defence Minister Andrew Hastie.

I would also like to acknowledge the senior public servants and members of the defence force here this evening. I thank you for your service.

And the members of the diplomatic corps - thank you all for being here.

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It’s what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world’s great and enduring democracies.

Our people have an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

A pluralist nation, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other’s humanity and for each other’s right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land’s first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia’s connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, through travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our rich heritage: drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and from more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset. It gives us perspective, wisdom and experience that we now apply in securing our future in the Indo-Pacific.

We know our choices can make a difference in the world and what happens in the world makes a difference to us.

We know the costs of war, and the value of peace.

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

We want to maintain peace.

And we want a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and to disagree.

We want each country – large or small – to operate by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed according to the rules, and by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, and by contributing our efforts to the balance of power in our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by responding, when we, or our neighbours, are coerced or have sovereignty threatened.

We do this by combining reassurance and deterrence – by working with our friends and partners, openly and transparently, so no potential aggressor thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the Security Council's Panel of Experts on the DPRK after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, conducting illegal arms transfers to Russia and threatening our region, including our friends in the Republic of Korea and Japan.

The political, humanitarian and security situation in Myanmar continues to worsen, with far-reaching implications for our region and its people, including the Rohingya.

China's vessels are using water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew in the South China Sea.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at risk.

In December, ASEAN Foreign Ministers spoke about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their concern over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

The existing system of rules and norms is under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not evolved in turn.

The inability to reach agreement in so many fora means that a collective approach to counter grey zone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

And all together, these factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades – with a higher degree of risk that miscalculation could lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today.

I've mentioned Ukraine, whose people continue to heroically fight for their homeland against Russia's flagrant breach of the UN Charter.

Australia is resolute in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

And we are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

On October 7, Israel was brutally attacked by Hamas.

The greatest loss of Jewish life in a single day since the Holocaust.

Hamas killed 1,200 people, including Australian grandmother Galit Carbone - and continues to hold 134 hostages.

Australia remains steadfast in our call for the immediate and unconditional release of remaining hostages – families of whom I have met both in Israel and Australia.

Any country under attack by Hamas would defend itself.

And in defending itself, every country is bound by the same fundamental rules.

Israel must comply with international humanitarian law.

It must make major and immediate changes to the conduct of its military campaign, to protect civilians, journalists and aid workers.

It must comply with the binding orders of the International Court of Justice, including to enable the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance at scale.

Six months on from October 7, well over one million Palestinians in Gaza are at risk of starvation.

More than 33,000 Palestinians have been killed, including many thousands of women and children.

196 aid workers have been killed, including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

Hamas is a terrorist organisation. It is proscribed as such in Australia. It has no respect for international law.

Democracies seek and accept higher standards.

This is why Australia and so many countries have called on the Netanyahu Government to change course, including in respect of a major ground offensive in Rafah. Again we say, do not go down this path.

When President Biden cautions that Mr Netanyahu *“is hurting Israel more than helping”*...

And when Senator Schumer expresses concern that *“Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world”*...

It is in Israel’s own interest that the Netanyahu Government responds to the demands of the international community.

Anyone who considers themselves a friend of Israel should be making that point.

In addition to our demand on all parties for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, enabling the release of hostages, the protection of civilians, and safe and unimpeded humanitarian access...

We need to build the pathway out of the endless cycle of violence.

We need to build the pathway to a peace that is enduring, and just.

Because the simple truth is that a secure and prosperous future for both Israelis and Palestinians will only come with a two-state solution. Recognition of each other’s right to exist. A Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

We are now thirty years on from the Oslo Accords that put Palestinian statehood at the end of a process.

The failures of this approach by all parties over decades - as well as the Netanyahu Government’s refusal to even engage on the question of a Palestinian state - have caused widespread frustration.

So the international community is now considering the question of Palestinian statehood as a way of building momentum towards a two-state solution.

As British Foreign Secretary Cameron has said the UK *“will look at the issue of recognising a Palestinian state, including at the United Nations”*. He said this could make the two-state solution *“irreversible”*.

There are always those who claim recognition is rewarding an enemy.

This is wrong.

First, because Israel’s own security depends on a two-state solution.

There is no long-term security for Israel unless it is recognised by the countries of its region.

But the normalisation agenda that was being pursued before October 7 cannot proceed without progress on Palestinian statehood.

Saudi Arabia has made clear *“there will be no diplomatic relations with Israel unless an independent Palestinian state is recognized”*.

Second, because there is no role for Hamas in a future Palestinian state. Hamas is a terrorist organisation which has the explicit intent of the destruction of the State of Israel and the Jewish people.

And it should be acknowledged that Hamas also rains terror on the Palestinian people in Gaza.

It has long been understood that any future Palestinian state cannot be in a position to threaten Israel’s security and will need a reformed Palestinian Authority.

Recognising a Palestinian state – one that can only exist side by side with a secure Israel – doesn’t just offer the Palestinian people an opportunity to realise their aspirations.

It also strengthens the forces for peace, and undermines extremism. It undermines Hamas, Iran and Iran’s other destructive proxies in the region.

A two-state solution is the only hope of breaking the endless cycle of violence.

This is why we are urging all parties to return to the table, and why we are engaging to support all efforts to advance a political process, including discussions between regional leaders.

Australia’s diplomacy and decisions are focused on helping advance this lasting peace – which is what we have always said we would do.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

There is a need to acknowledge the real trauma on all sides, to acknowledge each other’s humanity, and to come together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

That is also the approach I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

It is disheartening to witness the number of Australians that increasingly struggle to discuss this conflict without condemning their fellow citizens.

This imperils our democracy. We have to keep listening to each other; respecting each other.

But I have heard language demonstrating that people are losing respect for each other’s humanity.

Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

I've heard people who claim to represent one perspective, diminishing the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

And it's not ok to excuse egregious acts, just because they're done by people whose views you share.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by shouting each other down and by insisting on respective absolutes.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other and our right to live in peace.

Yet there are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

The Greens political party is willing to purposely amplify disinformation, exploiting distress in a blatant and cynical play for votes. With no regard for the social disharmony they are fuelling.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

At the same time, Mr Dutton reflexively dismisses concern for Palestinians as "Hamas sympathising."

On this, and in his approach to the world, Mr Dutton needs to decide if he wants to be a leader in difficult times - or if he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

Australians know our country needs mature leadership for serious times.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

The Albanese Government is meeting the challenges Australia faces in our region and the world, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

Because this is the only way to advance Australia's interests in shaping a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous.

A region free of hegemony.

A region in balance.

Where countries, large and small, have the freedom to decide our own futures.

Where we operate by the same rules, and we have space to agree and to disagree.

Securing our region today requires modernising the legacies of Curtin, Whitlam and Evatt, prioritising alliance, region and rules.

Starting with the alliance, which has only grown in strength and depth in the past two years.

The United States is our closest ally, our principal strategic partner and our largest source of foreign investment.

We share values and ideals, and our alliance is underpinned by mutual respect for each others' sovereignty and national interests.

The Indo-Pacific would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States and its security guarantee to the region.

As I have said before, American leadership remains indispensable – it is the great builder of alliances and networks, essential for balance in a multipolar region.

I know that will be the case in the future, as it has been for many decades past. We will continue to work closely with whoever is elected by the American people as US President.

But US leadership does not abrogate our own responsibility. We know we cannot expect the US to secure our future for us.

Which brings me to my next priority – the region we live in.

We take forward the Labor tradition of a defence and foreign policy anchored Asia and the Pacific.

Since day one of this government, we have been investing in our region and our relationships, to build our collective resilience and sovereignty.

This year alone we have hosted the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in March.

Through the Melbourne Declaration, ASEAN and Australia's leaders reaffirmed ASEAN's centrality in fostering peace and enhancing mutual trust among countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

We are building shared prosperity with Southeast Asia, including through Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040.

Our Quad partnership with India, Japan and the United States is listening and responding to the priorities of regional partners, while respecting the enduring

leadership of ASEAN, the Indian Ocean Rim Association, and the Pacific Islands Forum.

And Australia is investing more than ever in the Pacific.

Guided by the needs of our Pacific partners and the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia is boosting our support for sport, climate finance, policing and maritime cooperation.

The Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union embodies our approach to partnership.

It is the biggest step Australia has taken with a Pacific country since the independence of Papua New Guinea nearly 50 years ago.

We have released Australia's first international development policy in almost a decade, and are rebuilding our development and humanitarian programs.

Through these and other investments, we are working to help our partners become more economically resilient, develop critical infrastructure and provide their own security, so they have less need to call on others.

We recognise we live in a more contested region, and we have to work harder to be a trusted partner of choice. The opportunity to be the only partner of choice in the Pacific was lost to us over the previous decade.

Being a partner of choice relies on being mature and credible.

Stabilising our relationship with China has not only helped rebuild our credibility with our regional partners, but it has also enabled Australia to speak directly to China's leadership.

Our efforts so far have seen impediments lifted on over \$19 billion of Australian exports, and we continue to press for outstanding impediments on around \$1 billion of exports to be resolved.

We are taking forward regular leader-level and ministerial engagement with China.

Some imply that there is something to be gained in limiting contact with China.

The reality is that China is the world's second largest economy, representing 17% of the world's GDP. China's growth story has been a crucial driver of prosperity in Australia, in our region and in the world.

China's size and weight makes it central to global challenges, from climate change to health. As a great power, China will continue to assert itself in reshaping the region and the world.

Advancing our interests requires engagement, and contrary to what some suggest, engagement does not imply concession.

It is worrying that large-scale Chinese military operations in the Taiwan Strait have become a routine event. The risk of an accident, and potential escalation, is growing.

Australia's longstanding and bipartisan position is to oppose unilateral changes to the status quo. We call for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues through dialogue without the threat or use of force or coercion.

Some may say this is insufficient in the circumstances that we face. But I would invite reflection on the alternative.

Australia is always working for peace. And for us, our third priority, is upholding and strengthening the rules that work to prevent conflict.

Since I became Foreign Minister, I have consistently called for open lines of communication between the great powers.

We welcome the resumption of leader-level and military-level dialogue between the United States and China as important steps on the path towards stability that the region has called for.

This is also a reminder of the role militaries must play in reassurance, as well as deterrence.

The circumstances we face only reinforce the need for militaries to be in contact.

And that the need for new preventive architecture and conflict prevention measures has only grown, to increase resilience and promote transparency and reassurance.

This is how our government has sought to engage our partners at every step of the AUKUS agreement with the United States and the United Kingdom.

Today we announced that AUKUS partners are considering cooperation with Japan on AUKUS Pillar II advanced capability projects.

We are committed to AUKUS meeting the highest nuclear non-proliferation standards.

The IAEA DG Grossi has welcomed our continued openness and transparency. We look forward to our co-presidency of the IAEA's International Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna next month.

The Albanese Government is progressing the proud Labor commitment to a world without nuclear weapons.

Just as we carry forward the Labor commitment to international organisations, seeking to reform them for today's challenges and recognising that many developing countries are inadequately served by too much of the international system.

We want everyone to have a voice.

Because Australia knows that international rules and norms deter conflict and underpin our security and prosperity.

All of our efforts – through the alliance, region and rules – are for the ultimate goal: to avert conflict, build prosperity and sustain the kind of peace we want.

Our efforts provide reassurance to persuade all countries that their interests are best served by peace, and deterrence, to ensure that the costs of aggression continue to outweigh the benefits.

Often, security discourses have artificially divided actions to reassure and to deter.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that thinking limits our potency when we have to maximise all the tools of national power.

As recognised in the Defence Strategic Review, credible deterrence requires using all levers of statecraft to create an unacceptably high cost for any potential adversary.

The logic of the post-war economic order was to enable development and growth through openness.

And today, as then, economic integration provides a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

Economic interdependence can, as we know, also be misused for strategic and political ends.

And this is one way rules play an important role in deterrence – in this case international trade rules, which also create a level playing field.

That's why multilateral engagement in international organisations like the UN is a core national interest, too often dismissed by some.

These organisations are where nations come together to decide the rules and defend the peace. As the saying goes, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

I want to make this point about diplomacy – which in these forums and elsewhere, builds coalitions, reduces tensions, negotiates agreements and resolves disputes.

Diplomacy frames the calculus that each country faces.

Diplomacy signals intent, credibility and even red lines.

The new concept of National Defence, underpinning the inaugural National Defence Strategy, comprehends that as we seek to maintain peace in our region, our nation's front line is diplomacy.

And our diplomacy is underwritten by our military capability.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles made this point last week: that deterring conflict in today's environment requires a new approach – one that harnesses all elements of our national power.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs for those who would seek to coerce us.

Indeed, in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into diplomacy and engagement, the risk of military capabilities being called upon for conflict increases.

CONCLUSION

As international trends continue to go in the wrong direction, Australia's coordination of our military, diplomatic, strategic and economic power...

Our ability to reassure partners and to deter threats...

Becomes ever more important.

Our region is being reshaped.

And Australians know our choices and actions matter.

So we work with partners and friends to shape the region in our interests – contributing to the region's balance of power, so no country dominates and no country is dominated.

We seek to be the credible and mature partner we expect other countries to be.

And I end where I began. Australians have always been connected to the world.

Through this connection we know what it is about Australia we need to project and what we need to protect.

A pluralist nation, welcoming, respectful, celebrating each other's rights and freedoms.

This is the nation whose future we seek to secure.

We need to build the pathway out of the endless cycle of violence.

We need to build the pathway to a peace that is enduring, and just.

The premise has to be acknowledgement of each other's right to exist.

Because the simple truth is that a secure and prosperous future for both Israelis and Palestinians will only come with a two-state solution. A Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

Prime Minister Netanyahu has said he won't relinquish full security control over territory west of Jordan, and I quote, *"this is contrary to a Palestinian state"*.

We are now thirty years on from the Oslo Accords that put Palestinian statehood at the end of a process.

There is widespread frustration with the failure of this approach - and frustration with the refusal of the Netanyahu Government to engage on the question, and a lack of genuine Palestinian leadership.

So the international community is now considering the question of Palestinian statehood as a way of building momentum towards a two-state solution.

As British Foreign Secretary Cameron has said, the UK *"will look at the issue of recognising a Palestinian state, including at the United Nations"*. He said this could make the two-state solution *"irreversible"*.

There are always those who claim recognition is rewarding the enemy.

This is wrong for two reasons.

First, Israel's own security depends on a two-state solution.

There is no long-term security for Israel unless it is recognised by the countries of its region.

But the normalisation agenda that was being pursued before October 7 cannot proceed without progress on Palestinian statehood.

Saudi Arabia has made clear *"there will be no diplomatic relations with Israel unless an independent Palestinian state is recognized"*.

Second, there is no role for Hamas in a future Palestinian state.

Hamas is a terrorist organisation which has the explicit intent of the destruction of the state of Israel and the Jewish people.

And it should be acknowledged, that Hamas also rains terror on the Palestinian people in Gaza.

Recognising a Palestinian state – one that can only exist side by side with a secure Israel – not only offers the Palestinian people an opportunity to realise their aspirations, it also strengthens the forces for peace, undermining Hamas.

And it is the only hope to break the endless cycle of violence.

Australia's diplomacy and decisions are focused on helping advance this lasting peace – which is what we have always said we would do.

And as part of that we are urging all parties to return to the table and support all efforts to advance a political process, including discussions between regional leaders.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

There is a need to acknowledge the real trauma on all sides, to acknowledge each other's humanity, and to come together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

That is also the approach I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

It is disheartening to witness the number of Australians that increasingly struggle to discuss this conflict without condemning their fellow citizens.

This imperils our democracy. We have to keep listening to each other; respecting each other.

But I have heard language demonstrating that people are losing respect for each other's humanity.

Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

I've heard people who claim to represent one perspective, diminishing the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

And it's not ok to excuse egregious acts, just because they're done by people on your side.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by shouting each other down and by insisting on respective absolutes.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other and our right to live in peace.

Yet there are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

The Greens political party is willing to purposely amplify disinformation, exploiting distress in a blatant and cynical play for votes. With no regard for the social disharmony they are not only fuelling but creating.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

At the same time, Mr Dutton reflexively dismisses concern for Palestinians as " Hamas sympathising."

On this, and in his approach to the world, Mr Dutton needs to decide if he wants to be a leader in difficult times - or if he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

The Australian people already decided at the last election that we need more than tough talk that nobody took seriously, and belligerence that left Australia with fewer friends, less credibility and less trust.

Australians know our country needs mature leadership for serious times.

And we are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

On October 7, Israel was brutally attacked by Hamas.

The greatest loss of Jewish life in a single day since the Holocaust.

Hamas killed 1200 people, including Australian grandmother Galit Carbone - and continues to hold more than 100 hostages.

Australia remains steadfast in our call for the immediate and unconditional release of remaining hostages – families of whom I have met both in Israel and Australia.

Any country under attack by Hamas would defend itself.

And in defending itself, every country is bound by the same fundamental rules.

Israel must comply with international humanitarian law.

It must make major and immediate changes to the conduct of its military campaign, to protect civilians, journalists and aid workers.

It must comply with the binding orders of the International Court of Justice, including to enable the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance at scale.

Six months on from October 7, well over one million Palestinians in Gaza are at risk of starvation.

More than 33,000 Palestinians have been killed, including many thousands of women and children.

196 aid workers have been killed, including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

Hamas is a terrorist organisation. It has no respect for international law.

Democracies seek and accept higher standards.

This is why Australia and so many countries have called on the Netanyahu Government to change course, including in respect of a major ground offensive in Rafah. Again we say, do not go down this path.

When President Biden cautions that Mr Netanyahu “is hurting Israel more than helping”...

And when Senator Schumer expresses concern that “Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world”...

It is in Israel’s own interest that the Netanyahu Government responds to the demands of the international community.

Anyone who considers themselves a friend of Israel should be making that point.

In addition to our demand on all parties for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, enabling the release of hostages, the protection of civilians, and safe and unimpeded humanitarian access...

We need to build the pathway out of the endless cycle of violence.

We need to build the pathway to a peace that is enduring, and just.

Because the simple truth is that a secure and prosperous future for both Israelis and Palestinians will only come with a two-state solution. Recognition of each other's right to exist. A Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

We are now thirty years on from the Oslo Accords that put Palestinian statehood at the end of a process.

The failures of this approach - by all parties over decades, as well as the Netanyahu Government's rejection of a Palestinian state and refusal to even engage on the question - have caused widespread frustration.

So the international community is now considering the question of Palestinian statehood as a way of building momentum towards a two-state solution.

As British Foreign Secretary Cameron has said the UK "*will look at the issue of recognising a Palestinian state, including at the United Nations*". He said this could make the two-state solution "*irreversible*".

There are always those who claim recognition is rewarding an enemy.

This is wrong.

First, because Israel's own security depends on a two-state solution.

There is no long-term security for Israel unless it is recognised by the countries of its region.

But the normalisation agenda that was being pursued before October 7 cannot proceed without progress on Palestinian statehood.

Saudi Arabia has made clear "*there will be no diplomatic relations with Israel unless an independent Palestinian state is recognized*".

Second, because there is no role for Hamas in a future Palestinian state. Hamas is a terrorist organisation which has the explicit intent of the destruction of the state of Israel and the Jewish people.

And it should be acknowledged that Hamas also rains terror on the Palestinian people in Gaza.

It has long been understood that any future Palestinian state cannot be in a position to threaten Israel's security and will need a reformed Palestinian Authority.

Recognising a Palestinian state – one that can only exist side by side with a secure Israel – doesn't just offer the Palestinian people an opportunity to realise their aspirations.

It also strengthens the forces for peace, and undermines extremism. It undermines Hamas, Iran and Iran's other destructive proxies in the region.

A two-state solution is the only hope to break the endless cycle of violence.

This is why we are urging all parties to return to the table and support all efforts to advance a political process, including discussions between regional leaders.

Australia's diplomacy and decisions are focused on helping advance this lasting peace – which is what we have always said we would do.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

There is a need to acknowledge the real trauma on all sides, to acknowledge each other's humanity, and to come together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

That is also the approach I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

It is disheartening to witness the number of Australians that increasingly struggle to discuss this conflict without condemning their fellow citizens.

This imperils our democracy. We have to keep listening to each other; respecting each other.

But I have heard language demonstrating that people are losing respect for each other's humanity.

Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

I've heard people who claim to represent one perspective, diminishing the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

And it's not ok to excuse egregious acts, just because they're done by people whose views you share.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by shouting each other down and by insisting on respective absolutes.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other and our right to live in peace.

Yet there are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

The Greens political party is willing to purposely amplifying disinformation, exploiting distress in a blatant and cynical play for votes. With no regard for the social disharmony they are fuelling.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

At the same time, Mr Dutton reflexively dismisses concern for Palestinians as " Hamas sympathising."

On this, and in his approach to the world, Mr Dutton needs to decide if he wants to be a leader in difficult times - or if he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

Australians know our country needs mature leadership for serious times.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SPEECH TO THE ANU NATIONAL SECURITY COLLEGE
“SECURING OUR FUTURE”
CANBERRA, TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Thank you Vice Chancellor Bell for hosting us this evening, and to Chelsea our MC. Rory, thank you for your introduction.

I too acknowledge the traditional owners, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would like to acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues, including the Treasurer Jim Chalmers, Attorney General Mark Dreyfus and Shadow Defence Minister Andrew Hastie.

I would also like to acknowledge the senior public servants and members of the defence force here this evening. I thank you for your service.

And the members of the diplomatic corps - thank you all for being here.

We are coming to the end of our second year in government.

Tonight I want to take account of these first two years – where we started and where we are now. But mostly I want to give you my perspectives on the challenges we face and what it will take to secure our future.

My starting point has always been who we are – because that is what we are seeking to secure. It's what our foreign policy projects and protects.

We are one of the world's great and enduring democracies.

Our people have an abiding tradition of respect for the dignity, rights and freedoms of every individual, founded upon the rule of law.

A pluralist nation, we welcome different races, religions and views, united by respect for each other's humanity and for each other's right to live in peace.

Australia has been connected to the world for thousands of years: First Nations people were this land's first diplomats and traders.

Today Australia's connections continue in who we are and what we do.

Connected by our curiosity and boldness, through travel, study, business, sport and the arts.

Connected by our rich heritage: drawn from the oldest continuing civilisation and from more than 300 ancestries.

Half of us born overseas, or with at least one parent born overseas.

This heritage from all reaches of the Earth is a national asset. It gives us perspective, wisdom and experience that we now apply in securing our future in the Indo-Pacific.

We know our choices can make a difference in the world and what happens in the world makes a difference to us.

We know the costs of war, and the value of peace.

WHAT WE WANT IN THE WORLD

We want to maintain peace.

And we want a peace that enables Australia and other countries to have the freedom to decide our own futures, free of interference.

To have the space to agree and to disagree.

We want each country – large or small – to operate by the same rules. Rules that we have all had a say in shaping.

And when disputes inevitably arise, we want them managed according to the rules, and by talking and cooperation, not by force or raw power.

This doesn't happen on its own. We help make it happen.

We do this by being active, by exercising agency, and by contributing our efforts to the balance of power in our region – so no country dominates, and no country is dominated.

We do this by responding, when we, or our neighbours, are coerced or have sovereignty threatened.

We do this by combining reassurance and deterrence – by working with our friends and partners, openly and transparently, so no potential aggressor thinks the pursuit of conflict is worth the risk.

We do this by engaging with others, even when we disagree.

We do this by making our case everywhere our interests are on the line, so what we want is heard and respected.

And we do all this to keep Australia prosperous and secure at home, and confident in the world.

CHALLENGES TO WHAT WE WANT

When we came to office, there were already major challenges that threatened Australia's interests.

And the international trends are not going in the right direction.

Climate change is leading to more disasters. Extreme weather threatens food and water security, with grave implications for global stability.

More people are displaced. More conflict risks and costs lives.

Longstanding rules are being bent, twisted or broken.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine demonstrates what is at stake in standing up to aggressors.

And just last week we saw Russia end the mandate of the Security Council's Panel of Experts on the DPRK after fourteen years of unanimous support.

The DPRK continues its unlawful activities with impunity, conducting illegal arms transfers to Russia and threatening our region, including our friends in the Republic of Korea and Japan.

The political, humanitarian and security situation in Myanmar continues to worsen, with far-reaching implications for our region and its people, including the Rohingya.

China's vessels are using water cannons and unsafe manoeuvres against Philippines vessels and crew in the South China Sea.

Our regional partners are clear about what is at risk.

In December, ASEAN Foreign Ministers spoke about developments that threaten regional peace and security in the maritime sphere.

We share their concern over claims and actions that are inconsistent with international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Australia knows we are not alone in having faced destabilising, provocative and coercive actions, including unsafe conduct at sea and in the air.

Add to this the threat of cyber attacks, interference, economic coercion and disinformation.

The existing system of rules and norms is under strain. And as we face evolving threats, the system has not evolved in turn.

The inability to reach agreement in so many fora means that a collective approach to counter grey zone threats remains frustratingly out of reach.

And all together, these factors give rise to the most confronting circumstances in our region in decades – with a higher degree of risk that miscalculation could lead to catastrophic conflict.

The costs of conflict are front of mind for all of us today.

I've mentioned Ukraine, whose people continue to heroically fight for their homeland against Russia's flagrant breach of the UN Charter.

Australia is resolute in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

And we are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

On October 7, Israel was brutally attacked by Hamas.

The greatest loss of Jewish life in a single day since the Holocaust.

Hamas killed 1,200 people, including Australian grandmother Galit Carbone - and continues to hold 134 hostages.

Australia remains steadfast in our call for the immediate and unconditional release of remaining hostages – families of whom I have met both in Israel and Australia.

Any country under attack by Hamas would defend itself.

And in defending itself, every country is bound by the same fundamental rules.

Israel must comply with international humanitarian law.

It must make major and immediate changes to the conduct of its military campaign, to protect civilians, journalists and aid workers.

It must comply with the binding orders of the International Court of Justice, including to enable the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance at scale.

Six months on from October 7, well over one million Palestinians in Gaza are at risk of starvation.

More than 33,000 Palestinians have been killed, including many thousands of women and children.

196 aid workers have been killed, including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

Hamas is a terrorist organisation. It is proscribed as such in Australia. It has no respect for international law.

Democracies seek and accept higher standards.

This is why Australia and so many countries have called on the Netanyahu Government to change course, including in respect of a major ground offensive in Rafah. Again we say, do not go down this path.

When President Biden cautions that Mr Netanyahu *“is hurting Israel more than helping”*...

And when Senator Schumer expresses concern that *“Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world”*...

It is in Israel’s own interest that the Netanyahu Government responds to the demands of the international community.

Anyone who considers themselves a friend of Israel should be making that point.

In addition to our demand on all parties for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, enabling the release of hostages, the protection of civilians, and safe and unimpeded humanitarian access...

We need to build the pathway out of the endless cycle of violence.

We need to build the pathway to a peace that is enduring, and just.

Because the simple truth is that a secure and prosperous future for both Israelis and Palestinians will only come with a two-state solution. Recognition of each other's right to exist. A Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

We are now thirty years on from the Oslo Accords that put Palestinian statehood at the end of a process.

The failures of this approach by all parties over decades - as well as the Netanyahu Government's refusal to even engage on the question of a Palestinian state - have caused widespread frustration.

So the international community is now considering the question of Palestinian statehood as a way of building momentum towards a two-state solution.

As British Foreign Secretary Cameron has said the *UK* "*will look at the issue of recognising a Palestinian state, including at the United Nations*". He said this could make the two-state solution "*irreversible*".

There are always those who claim recognition is rewarding an enemy.

This is wrong.

First, because Israel's own security depends on a two-state solution.

There is no long-term security for Israel unless it is recognised by the countries of its region.

But the normalisation agenda that was being pursued before October 7 cannot proceed without progress on Palestinian statehood.

Saudi Arabia has made clear "*there will be no diplomatic relations with Israel unless an independent Palestinian state is recognized*".

Second, because there is no role for Hamas in a future Palestinian state. Hamas is a terrorist organisation which has the explicit intent of the destruction of the state of Israel and the Jewish people.

And it should be acknowledged that Hamas also rains terror on the Palestinian people in Gaza.

It has long been understood that any future Palestinian state cannot be in a position to threaten Israel's security and will need a reformed Palestinian Authority.

Recognising a Palestinian state – one that can only exist side by side with a secure Israel – doesn't just offer the Palestinian people an opportunity to realise their aspirations.

It also strengthens the forces for peace, and undermines extremism. It undermines Hamas, Iran and Iran's other destructive proxies in the region.

A two-state solution is the only hope of breaking the endless cycle of violence.

This is why we are urging all parties to return to the table, and why we are engaging to support all efforts to advance a political process, including discussions between regional leaders.

Australia's diplomacy and decisions are focused on helping advance this lasting peace – which is what we have always said we would do.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

There is a need to acknowledge the real trauma on all sides, to acknowledge each other's humanity, and to come together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

That is also the approach I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

It is disheartening to witness the number of Australians that increasingly struggle to discuss this conflict without condemning their fellow citizens.

This imperils our democracy. We have to keep listening to each other; respecting each other.

But I have heard language demonstrating that people are losing respect for each other's humanity.

Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

I've heard people who claim to represent one perspective, diminishing the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

And it's not ok to excuse egregious acts, just because they're done by people whose views you share.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by shouting each other down and by insisting on respective absolutes.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other and our right to live in peace.

Yet there are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

The Greens political party is willing to purposely amplify disinformation, exploiting distress in a blatant and cynical play for votes. With no regard for the social disharmony they are fuelling.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

At the same time, Mr Dutton reflexively dismisses concern for Palestinians as “ Hamas sympathising.”

On this, and in his approach to the world, Mr Dutton needs to decide if he wants to be a leader in difficult times - or if he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

Australians know our country needs mature leadership for serious times.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

The Albanese Government is meeting the challenges Australia faces in our region and the world, with unprecedented coordination and ambition in our statecraft.

Because this is the only way to advance Australia's interests in shaping a region that is peaceful, stable and prosperous.

A region free of hegemony.

A region in balance.

Where countries, large and small, have the freedom to decide our own futures.

Where we operate by the same rules, and we have space to agree and to disagree.

Securing our region today requires modernising the legacies of Curtin, Whitlam and Evatt, prioritising alliance, region and rules.

Starting with the alliance, which has only grown in strength and depth in the past two years.

The United States is our closest ally, our principal strategic partner and our largest source of foreign investment.

We share values and ideals, and our alliance is underpinned by mutual respect for each others' sovereignty and national interests.

The Indo-Pacific would not have enjoyed long periods of stability and prosperity without the United States and its security guarantee to the region.

As I have said before, American leadership remains indispensable – it is the great builder of alliances and networks, essential for balance in a multipolar region.

I know that will be the case in the future, as it has been for many decades past. We will continue to work closely with whoever is elected by the American people as US President.

But US leadership does not abrogate our own responsibility. We know we cannot expect the US to secure our future for us.

Which brings me to my next priority – the region we live in.

We take forward the Labor tradition of a defence and foreign policy anchored Asia and the Pacific.

Since day one of this government, we have been investing in our region and our relationships, to build our collective resilience and sovereignty.

This year alone we have hosted the Indian Ocean Conference in February and the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in March.

Through the Melbourne Declaration, ASEAN and Australia's leaders reaffirmed ASEAN's centrality in fostering peace and enhancing mutual trust among countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

We are building shared prosperity with Southeast Asia, including through Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040.

Our Quad partnership with India, Japan and the United States is listening and responding to the priorities of regional partners, while respecting the enduring leadership of ASEAN, the Indian Ocean Rim Association, and the Pacific Islands Forum.

And Australia is investing more than ever in the Pacific.

Guided by the needs of our Pacific partners and the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia is boosting our support for sport, climate finance, policing and maritime cooperation.

The Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union embodies our approach to partnership.

It is the biggest step Australia has taken with a Pacific country since the independence of Papua New Guinea nearly 50 years ago.

We have released Australia's first international development policy in almost a decade, and are rebuilding our development and humanitarian programs.

Through these and other investments, we are working to help our partners become more economically resilient, develop critical infrastructure and provide their own security, so they have less need to call on others.

We recognise we live in a more contested region, and we have to work harder to be a trusted partner of choice. The opportunity to be the only partner of choice in the Pacific was lost to us over the previous decade.

Being a partner of choice relies on being mature and credible.

Stabilising our relationship with China has not only helped rebuild our credibility with our regional partners, but it has also enabled Australia to speak directly to China's leadership.

Our efforts so far have seen impediments lifted on over \$19 billion of Australian exports, and we continue to press for outstanding impediments on around \$1 billion of exports to be resolved.

We are taking forward regular leader-level and ministerial engagement with China.

Some imply that there is something to be gained in limiting contact with China.

The reality is that China is the world's second largest economy, representing 17% of the world's GDP. China's growth story has been a crucial driver of prosperity in Australia, in our region and in the world.

China's size and weight makes it central to global challenges, from climate change to health. As a great power, China will continue to assert itself in reshaping the region and the world.

Advancing our interests requires engagement, and contrary to what some suggest, engagement does not imply concession.

It is worrying that large-scale Chinese military operations in the Taiwan Strait have become a routine event. The risk of an accident, and potential escalation, is growing.

Australia's longstanding and bipartisan position is to oppose unilateral changes to the status quo. We call for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues through dialogue without the threat or use of force or coercion.

Some may say this is insufficient in the circumstances that we face. But I would invite reflection on the alternative.

Australia is always working for peace. And for us, our third priority, is upholding and strengthening the rules that work to prevent conflict.

Since I became Foreign Minister, I have consistently called for open lines of communication between the great powers.

We welcome the resumption of leader-level and military-level dialogue between the United States and China as important steps on the path towards stability that the region has called for.

This is also a reminder of the role militaries must play in reassurance, as well as deterrence.

The circumstances we face only reinforce the need for militaries to be in contact.

And that the need for new preventive architecture and conflict prevention measures has only grown, to increase resilience and promote transparency and reassurance.

As military capabilities grow, we know that a level of transparency is expected from our region and our partners – just as we expect transparency of others.

This is how our government has sought to engage our partners at every step of the AUKUS agreement with the United States and the United Kingdom.

Today we announced that AUKUS partners are considering cooperation with Japan on AUKUS Pillar II advanced capability projects.

We are committed to AUKUS meeting the highest nuclear non-proliferation standards.

The IAEA DG Grossi has welcomed our continued openness and transparency. We look forward to our co-presidency of the IAEA's International Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna next month.

The Albanese Government is progressing the proud Labor commitment to a world without nuclear weapons.

Just as we carry forward the Labor commitment to international organisations, seeking to reform them for today's challenges and recognising that many developing countries are inadequately served by too much of the international system.

We want everyone to have a voice.

Because Australia knows that international rules and norms deter conflict and underpin our security and prosperity.

All of our efforts – through the alliance, region and rules – are for the ultimate goal: to avert conflict, build prosperity and sustain the kind of peace we want.

Our efforts provide reassurance to persuade all countries that their interests are best served by peace, and deterrence, to ensure that the costs of aggression continue to outweigh the benefits.

Often, security discourses have artificially divided actions to reassure and to deter.

The implication being that the role of diplomacy is exclusively soft persuasion, while the hard edge of the military is our only deterrent.

But that thinking limits our potency when we have to maximise all the tools of national power.

As recognised in the Defence Strategic Review, credible deterrence requires using all levers of statecraft to create an unacceptably high cost for any potential adversary.

The logic of the post-war economic order was to enable development and growth through openness.

And today, as then, economic integration provides a critical incentive for peace as regional economies share the benefits of prosperity.

Economic interdependence can, as we know, also be misused for strategic and political ends.

And this is one way rules play an important role in deterrence – in this case international trade rules, which also create a level playing field.

That's why multilateral engagement in international organisations like the UN is a core national interest, too often dismissed by some.

These organisations are where nations come together to decide the rules and defend the peace. As the saying goes, if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

I want to make this point about diplomacy – which in these forums and elsewhere, builds coalitions, reduces tensions, negotiates agreements and resolves disputes.

Diplomacy frames the calculus that each country faces.

Diplomacy signals intent, credibility and even red lines.

The new concept of National Defence, underpinning the inaugural National Defence Strategy, comprehends that as we seek to maintain peace in our region, our nation's front line is diplomacy.

And our diplomacy is underwritten by our military capability.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles made this point last week: that deterring conflict in today's environment requires a new approach – one that harnesses all elements of our national power.

Here at home, our domestic resilience, our economic strength, our multicultural democracy - they also raise the costs for those who would seek to coerce us.

Indeed, in all of these cases, the levers to deter and reassure are mutually reinforcing.

Without credible military capability, the efficacy of diplomacy and economic integration are invariably diminished.

And without ever more investment into diplomacy and engagement, the risk of military capabilities being called upon for conflict increases.

CONCLUSION

As international trends continue to go in the wrong direction,
Australia's coordination of our military, diplomatic, strategic and
economic power...

Our ability to reassure partners and to deter threats...

Becomes ever more important.

Our region is being reshaped.

And Australians know our choices and actions matter.

So we work with partners and friends to shape the region in our
interests – contributing to the region's balance of power, so no
country dominates and no country is dominated.

We seek to be the credible and mature partner we expect other countries to be.

And I end where I began. Australians have always been connected to the world.

Through this connection we know what it is about Australia we need to project and what we need to protect.

A pluralist nation, welcoming, respectful, celebrating each other's rights and freedoms.

This is the nation whose future we seek to secure.

We are all horrified by the conflict in the Middle East.

On October 7, Israel was brutally attacked by Hamas.

The greatest loss of Jewish life in a single day since the Holocaust.

Hamas killed 1200 people, including Australian grandmother Galit Carbone - and continues to hold 134 hostages.

Australia remains steadfast in our call for the immediate and unconditional release of remaining hostages – families of whom I have met both in Israel and Australia.

Any country under attack by Hamas would defend itself.

And in defending itself, every country is bound by the same fundamental rules.

Israel must comply with international humanitarian law.

It must make major and immediate changes to the conduct of its military campaign, to protect civilians, journalists and aid workers.

It must comply with the binding orders of the International Court of Justice, including to enable the provision of basic services and humanitarian assistance at scale.

Six months on from October 7, well over one million Palestinians in Gaza are at risk of starvation.

More than 33,000 Palestinians have been killed, including many thousands of women and children.

196 aid workers have been killed, including Australian Zomi Frankcom.

Hamas is a terrorist organisation. It has no respect for international law.

Democracies seek and accept higher standards.

This is why Australia and so many countries have called on the Netanyahu Government to change course, including in respect of a major ground offensive in Rafah. Again we say, do not go down this path.

When President Biden cautions that Mr Netanyahu “is hurting Israel more than helping”...

And when Senator Schumer expresses concern that “Israel cannot hope to succeed as a pariah opposed by the rest of the world”...

It is in Israel’s own interest that the Netanyahu Government responds to the demands of the international community.

Anyone who considers themselves a friend of Israel should be making that point.

In addition to our demand on all parties for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, enabling the release of hostages, the protection of civilians, and safe and unimpeded humanitarian access...

We need to build the pathway out of the endless cycle of violence.

We need to build the pathway to a peace that is enduring, and just.

Because the simple truth is that a secure and prosperous future for both Israelis and Palestinians will only come with a two-state solution. Recognition of each other's right to exist. A Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

We are now thirty years on from the Oslo Accords that put Palestinian statehood at the end of a process.

The failures of this approach by all parties over decades - as well as the Netanyahu Government's refusal to even engage on the question of a Palestinian state - have caused widespread frustration.

So the international community is now considering the question of Palestinian statehood as a way of building momentum towards a two-state solution.

As British Foreign Secretary Cameron has said the UK "*will look at the issue of recognising a Palestinian state, including at the United Nations*". He said this could make the two-state solution "*irreversible*".

There are always those who claim recognition is rewarding an enemy.

This is wrong.

First, because Israel's own security depends on a two-state solution.

There is no long-term security for Israel unless it is recognised by the countries of its region.

But the normalisation agenda that was being pursued before October 7 cannot proceed without progress on Palestinian statehood.

Saudi Arabia has made clear "*there will be no diplomatic relations with Israel unless an independent Palestinian state is recognized*".

Second, because there is no role for Hamas in a future Palestinian state. Hamas is a terrorist organisation which has the explicit intent of the destruction of the state of Israel and the Jewish people.

And it should be acknowledged that Hamas also rains terror on the Palestinian people in Gaza.

It has long been understood that any future Palestinian state cannot be in a position to threaten Israel's security and will need a reformed Palestinian Authority.

Recognising a Palestinian state – one that can only exist side by side with a secure Israel – doesn't just offer the Palestinian people an opportunity to realise their aspirations.

It also strengthens the forces for peace, and undermines extremism. It undermines Hamas, Iran and Iran's other destructive proxies in the region.

A two-state solution is the only hope to break the endless cycle of violence.

This is why we are urging all parties to return to the table and support all efforts to advance a political process, including discussions between regional leaders.

Australia's diplomacy and decisions are focused on helping advance this lasting peace – which is what we have always said we would do.

CHALLENGES AT HOME

There is a need to acknowledge the real trauma on all sides, to acknowledge each other's humanity, and to come together - as peacemakers throughout history have done.

That is also the approach I urge community and political leaders in Australia to embrace.

It is disheartening to witness the number of Australians that increasingly struggle to discuss this conflict without condemning their fellow citizens.

This imperils our democracy. We have to keep listening to each other; respecting each other.

But I have heard language demonstrating that people are losing respect for each other's humanity.

Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

I've heard people who claim to represent one perspective, diminishing the legitimacy of the other. Seeking to intimidate and blame.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of Hamas.

It's not ok to blame anyone in Australia for the actions of the Netanyahu Government.

And it's not ok to excuse egregious acts, just because they're done by people whose views you share.

We gain nothing by reproducing the conflict here, by talking past each other, by shouting each other down and by insisting on respective absolutes.

As I said, we are a pluralist country, welcoming different races, religions and views.

What unites us is respect for each other and our right to live in peace.

Yet there are too many politicians in Australia who are manipulating legitimate and heartfelt community concern for their own ends.

The Greens political party is willing to purposely amplifying disinformation, exploiting distress in a blatant and cynical play for votes. With no regard for the social disharmony they are fuelling.

This is not some game. There are consequences.

At the same time, Mr Dutton reflexively dismisses concern for Palestinians as " Hamas sympathising."

On this, and in his approach to the world, Mr Dutton needs to decide if he wants to be a leader in difficult times - or if he wants to continue being a wrecking ball, making those times even more difficult.

Australians know our country needs mature leadership for serious times.

DFAT ESTIMATES – FM OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you, Chair.

I want to begin by updating the committee on the Australian Government's response to the crisis in the Middle East.

First I want to acknowledge the cooperation of the Committee in agreeing that our officials who are dealing with that crisis will attend today for a limited period of time, and naturally I don't consider this statement to be part of that time.

There are three core responsibilities for an Australian Government at this time.

One is to do everything we can to keep Australia unified, and make sure the community feels heard. Senators may have heard my opening statement at PM&C Estimates on Monday, and further discussion in Home Affairs Estimates.

The other two core Australian Government responsibilities in my portfolio.

First is to support Australians who want to leave to do so.

We have so far offered eight assisted departures from Tel Aviv, helping more than 600 Australians leave.

We have also arranged onward travel to Australia and facilitated many other Australians and their families to leave the region on commercial flights and flights arranged by other countries.

We continue to assist Australians who want to leave the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including supporting Australians in the West Bank on departure options, such as transport to Jordan with our international partners, and accommodation.

My department is in direct contact with 78 Australians, permanent representatives and their families who are seeking to leave Gaza.

We are deeply distressed that international efforts to secure civilian passage out of Gaza – efforts Australia is actively supporting - are yet to be successful.

This brings me to the second core Australian Government responsibility in my portfolio.

That is to work with other countries who share our goal of lowering the temperature in the Middle East.

Australia has unequivocally condemned the attacks on Israel by Hamas: targeting and murder of civilians, including women and children; taking of hostages; and indiscriminate rocket fire.

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

We stand with Israel and recognise its inherent right to defend itself.

We mourn the devastating loss of Israeli and Palestinian life.

We condemn Hamas as terrorist organisation that does not represent the Palestinian people and undermines the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Chair,

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is dire and human suffering is widespread.

Australia has consistently called for the protection of civilian lives.

We have consistently called for safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access, and safe passage for civilians.

There has been access in recent days but nowhere near enough.

We call for humanitarian pauses on hostilities, so food, water, medicine and other essential assistance can reach people in desperate need, and so civilians can get to safety.

The way Israel exercises its right to defend itself matters. It matters to civilians throughout the region, and it matters to Israel's ongoing security.

Innocent Palestinian civilians should not suffer because of the outrages perpetrated by Hamas.

The hopes for peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians will recede even further from reach if this generation of Palestinians is motivated by grief and resentment resulting from this crisis.

This may well have been one of Hamas's objectives. We cannot let them succeed.

This Government takes a principled, coherent and consistent foreign policy position.

It is centred on the objective of achieving a just and enduring peace between Israelis and Palestinians – where both can live securely behind internationally recognised borders.

Part of our hope in calling for humanitarian pauses is that these will help build trust and pave the way to a negotiated ceasefire.

Because there is no military operation that can secure an enduring peace. That requires a political process.

The international community needs to work together to chart a path out of this crisis towards that enduring peace in the form of a two state solution where Israelis and Palestinians can live securely behind internationally recognised borders.

This will need to see all sides respect the right of the other to exist.

It must see the removal of terrorist group Hamas.

It must see hope for the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians to a future state.

Advancing the cause of peace will require leadership, understanding and courage.

It requires all of us to lower the temperature. And this is of course one of the many critical discussions the Prime Minister is having with President Biden in Washington this week.

The Prime Minister will also be traveling to China next month.

We continue to stabilise our relationship with China, in the interest of both countries.

Our calm and consistent approach is seeing progress for the Australian people.

Australian exports to China worth \$20 billion in 2019 have been subject to impediments in recent years, and only \$1 billion remain impeded by the same measure.

Across coal, copper, cotton, timber, hay, barley and wine we have either seen resumption of trade or major progress towards resumption.

In addition to our economic interests, resumption of high-level dialogue has enabled us to step up advocacy on other issues that matter to Australians, such as human rights and consular cases.

Just two weeks ago, we were all relieved and thrilled to see Ms Cheng Lei return home to her children.

Understandably, stabilising relations with China and the situation in the Middle East are the focus of much of the public discussion of Australia's international relations at the moment.

But the broader effort also continues in advancing Australia's interests in shaping a region that is stable, prosperous and respectful of sovereignty.

We must ensure that no state ever concludes that the benefits of conflict outweigh the risks.

Our foreign and defence policies work together to make Australia's contribution to the strategic balance of power that keeps the peace in our region.

A balance where strategic reassurance through diplomacy is underwritten by military deterrence.

That includes working with our Southeast Asian partners who, like us, are navigating difficult strategic circumstances.

Since the Estimates, the Prime Minister has launched Nicholas Moore's report to government: *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*, which sets our practical recommendations to boost our economic engagement in our region.

Trading and investing more in our region means more opportunities for Australian businesses to grow, creating more Australian jobs and boosting our economic prosperity.

It also advances our strategic interests by creating the shared value that is a critical incentive for peace and stability in a time of heightened geostrategic contest.

Pacific

DFAT ESTIMATES – FM OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you, Chair.

I want to begin by updating the committee on the Australian Government's response to the crisis in the Middle East.

In doing so, I want to acknowledge the cooperation of the Committee in agreeing that our officials who are dealing with that crisis will attend today for a limited period of time, and naturally I don't consider this statement to be part of that time.

The Australian Government has three core responsibilities in this crisis.

One is to do everything we can to keep Australia unified, and make sure the community feels heard. Senators may have heard my opening statement at PM&C Estimates on Monday, and further discussion in Home Affairs Estimates.

The other two core Australian Government responsibilities are in my portfolio.

First is to support Australians who want to leave to do so.

I thank everyone from my department, the Australian Defence Force, and airlines who have been part of this effort.

Sentence on numbers assisted to leave

We continue to assist Australians who want to leave Israel the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

We are supporting Australians in the West Bank on departure options, such as transport to Jordan with our international partners, and accommodation.

My department is in direct contact with 78 Australians, permanent representatives and their families who are seeking to leave Gaza.

We are deeply distressed that international efforts to secure civilian passage out of Gaza – efforts Australia is actively supporting - are yet to be successful.

This brings me to the second core Australian Government responsibility in my portfolio.

That is to work with other countries who share our goal of an enduring peace in the Middle East.

Australia has unequivocally condemned the attacks on Israel by Hamas: targeting and murder of civilians, including women and children; taking of hostages; and indiscriminate rocket fire.

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

We stand with Israel and recognise its inherent right to defend itself.

We mourn the devastating loss of Israeli and Palestinian life.

We condemn Hamas, a terrorist organisation that does not represent the Palestinian people and undermines the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Chair,

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is dire and human suffering is widespread.

Australia has consistently called for the protection of civilian lives.

We have consistently called for safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access, and safe passage for civilians.

There has been some access in recent days but nowhere near enough.

We call for humanitarian pauses on hostilities, so food, water, medicine and other essential assistance can reach people in desperate need, and so civilians can get to safety.

We note that many of our closest partners have made similar calls.

The way Israel exercises its right to defend itself matters. It matters to civilians throughout the region, and it matters to Israel's ongoing security.

Innocent Palestinian civilians should not suffer because of the outrages perpetrated by Hamas.

The hopes for peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians will recede even further from reach if today's generations are motivated by grief and resentment resulting from this crisis.

This is one of Hamas's objectives. We cannot let them succeed.

The international community must work together to chart a path out of this crisis towards a ceasefire and a political process.

That political process must end in a just and enduring peace, in the form of a two state solution where Israelis and Palestinians can live securely behind internationally recognised borders.

This will need to see all sides respect the right of the other to exist.

It must see the removal of terrorist group Hamas.

It must deliver the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians for statehood.

Advancing the cause of peace will require leadership, understanding and courage.

These are of course among the many critical discussions the Prime Minister is having with President Biden in Washington this week.

Understandably, the situation in the Middle East are the focus of much of the public discussion of Australia's international relations at the moment.

But the broader effort also continues in advancing Australia's interests in shaping a region that is stable, prosperous and respectful of sovereignty.

I look forward to discussing how the Albanese Government is advancing these interests with the Committee today.

DFAT ESTIMATES – FM OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you, Chair.

I want to begin by updating the committee on the Australian Government's response to the crisis in the Middle East.

In doing so, I want to acknowledge the cooperation of the Committee in agreeing that our officials who are dealing with that crisis will attend today for a limited period of time, and naturally I don't consider this statement to be part of that time.

The Australian Government has three core responsibilities in this crisis.

One is to do everything we can to keep Australia unified, and make sure the community feels heard. Senators may have heard my opening statement at PM&C Estimates on Monday, and further discussion in Home Affairs Estimates.

The other two core Australian Government responsibilities are in my portfolio.

First is to support Australians who want to leave to do so.

I thank everyone from my department, the Australian Defence Force, and airlines who have been part of this effort.

Sentence on numbers assisted to leave

We continue to assist Australians who want to leave Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

We are supporting Australians in the West Bank on departure options, such as transport to Jordan with our international partners, and accommodation.

My department is in direct contact with 78 Australians, permanent representatives and their families who are seeking to leave Gaza.

We are deeply distressed that international efforts to secure civilian passage out of Gaza – efforts Australia is actively supporting - are yet to be successful.

DFAT continues to advise “do not travel” to Lebanon, due to the volatile security situation, and the risk of the security situation deteriorating further.

These points bring me to the second core Australian Government responsibility in my portfolio.

That is to work with other countries who share our goal of containing this conflict, and of seeing an enduring peace in the Middle East, grounded in a two-state solution, where Israelis and Palestinians can live securely behind internationally recognised borders.

Australia has unequivocally condemned the attacks on Israel by Hamas: targeting and murder of civilians, including women and children; taking of hostages; and indiscriminate rocket fire.

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

We stand with Israel and recognise its inherent right to defend itself.

We mourn the devastating loss of Israeli and Palestinian life.

We condemn Hamas, a terrorist organisation that does not represent the Palestinian people and undermines the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Chair,

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is dire and human suffering is widespread.

Australia has consistently called for the protection of civilian lives.

We have consistently called for safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access, and safe passage for civilians.

There has been some access in recent days but nowhere near enough.

We call for humanitarian pauses on hostilities, so food, water, medicine and other essential assistance can reach people in desperate need, and so civilians can get to safety.

We note that many of our closest partners have made similar calls.

The way Israel exercises its right to defend itself matters. It matters to civilians throughout the region, and it matters to Israel's ongoing security.

Innocent Palestinian civilians should not suffer because of the outrages perpetrated by Hamas.

The hopes for peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians will recede even further from reach if today's generations are motivated by grief and resentment resulting from this crisis.

This is one of Hamas's objectives. We cannot let them succeed.

Rather, the international community must work together to chart a path out of this crisis, towards a political process.

That political process must end in a just and enduring peace, in the form of a two state solution where Israelis and Palestinians can live securely behind internationally recognised borders.

This will need to see all sides respect the right of the other to exist.

It must see the removal of terrorist group Hamas.

It must deliver the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians for statehood.

Advancing the cause of peace will require leadership, understanding and courage.

These are of course among the many critical discussions the Prime Minister is having with President Biden in Washington this week.

Understandably, the situation in the Middle East are the focus of much of the public discussion of Australia's international relations at the moment.

But the broader effort also continues in advancing Australia's interests in shaping a region that is stable, prosperous and respectful of sovereignty.

I look forward to discussing how the Albanese Government is advancing these interests with the Committee today.

DFAT ESTIMATES – FM OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you, Chair.

I want to begin by updating the committee on the Australian Government's response to the crisis in the Middle East.

In doing so, I want to acknowledge the cooperation of the Committee in agreeing that our officials who are dealing with that crisis will attend today for a limited period of time, and naturally I don't consider this statement to be part of that time.

The Australian Government has three core responsibilities in this crisis.

One is to do everything we can to keep Australia unified, and make sure the community feels heard. Senators may have heard my opening statement at PM&C Estimates on Monday, and further discussion in Home Affairs Estimates.

The other two core Australian Government responsibilities are in my portfolio.

First is to support Australians who want to leave to do so.

I thank everyone from my department, both in Canberra and at our overseas posts; I thank the Australian Defence Force, and the airlines who have been part of this effort.

Sentence on numbers assisted to leave

We continue to assist Australians who want to leave Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

We are supporting Australians in the West Bank on departure options, such as transport to Jordan with our international partners, and accommodation.

My department is in direct contact with 78 Australians, permanent representatives and their families who are seeking to leave Gaza.

We are deeply distressed that international efforts to secure civilian passage out of Gaza – efforts Australia is actively supporting - are yet to be successful.

DFAT continues to advise “do not travel” to Lebanon, due to the volatile security situation, and the risk of the security situation deteriorating further.

These points bring me to the second core Australian Government responsibility in my portfolio.

That is to work with other countries who share our goal of containing this conflict, and of seeing an enduring peace in the Middle East, grounded in a two-state solution, where Israelis and Palestinians can live securely behind internationally recognised borders.

Australia has unequivocally condemned the attacks on Israel by Hamas: targeting and murder of civilians, including women and children; taking of hostages; and indiscriminate rocket fire.

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

We stand with Israel and recognise its inherent right to defend itself.

We mourn the devastating loss of Israeli and Palestinian life.

We mourn with Jewish communities in Australia - and knowing that more Jews were killed in this attack than on any single day since the Holocaust, we understand how it brings back that trauma.

We mourn with Palestinian communities in Australia, who have lost thousands of their kin and who fear for loved ones in the dire humanitarian situation.

We condemn Hamas, a terrorist organisation that does not represent the Palestinian people and undermines the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Chair,

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is dire and human suffering is widespread.

Australia has consistently called for the protection of civilian lives.

We have consistently called for safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access, and safe passage for civilians.

There has been some access in recent days but nowhere near enough.

We call for humanitarian pauses on hostilities, so food, water, medicine and other essential assistance can reach people in desperate need, and so civilians can get to safety.

We note that many of our closest partners have made similar calls.

The way Israel exercises its right to defend itself matters. It matters to civilians throughout the region, and it matters to Israel's ongoing security.

Innocent Palestinian civilians should not suffer because of the outrages perpetrated by Hamas.

The hopes for peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians will recede even further from reach if today's generations are motivated by grief and resentment resulting from this crisis.

This is one of Hamas's objectives. We cannot let them succeed.

Rather, the international community must work together to chart a path out of this crisis, towards a political process.

That political process must end in a just and enduring peace, in the form of a two state solution where Israelis and Palestinians can live securely behind internationally recognised borders.

This will need to see all sides respect the right of the other to exist.

It must see the removal of terrorist group Hamas.

It must deliver the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians for statehood.

Advancing the cause of peace will require leadership, understanding and courage.

These are of course among the many critical discussions the Prime Minister is having with President Biden in Washington this week.

Understandably, the situation in the Middle East are the focus of much of the public discussion of Australia's international relations at the moment.

But the broader effort also continues in advancing Australia's interests in shaping a region that is stable, prosperous and respectful of sovereignty.

I look forward to discussing how the Albanese Government is advancing these interests with the Committee today.

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES FM OPENING STATEMENT

I thank the Chair and the Committee.

I want to begin by updating Senators on our international engagements.

The Committee will be familiar with my travel as Foreign Minister – visiting 37 countries, including 9 more than once.

In the first half of this year, we are focused on bringing the world to Australia.

Already this month we have already had visits by foreign and defence ministers from New Zealand and last week we had the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea address the Australian Parliament.

Over the weekend in Perth, I hosted the Indian Ocean Conference, attended by the President of Sri Lanka, and ministers from Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Japan, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nepal, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Tonga, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Vietnam.

And next month, the Prime Minister host Southeast Asian leaders at the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in Melbourne.

Senators, last week we were all appalled and outraged by the suspended death sentence received by Australian citizen, Dr Yang Jun, in Beijing.

The Australian Government has conveyed our objections to the Chinese Government at senior levels.

All Australians want to see Dr Yang reunited with his family. We will persist in our advocacy.

Senators, my recent travel to the Middle East reinforced that Australia is a respected voice, even if we are not a central player in that region.

And the Government is using Australia's voice to advocate for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and a pathway out of this conflict.

We want to see the release of hostages, the upholding of international law and protection of civilians.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is dire and getting worse.

The linchpin of humanitarian support there is UNRWA. It does life-saving work.

However, the recent allegations against UNRWA staff are serious and can't be ignored.

UNRWA's life-saving work is why Australian Governments - of both stripes - have provided funding to UNRWA since 1951.

Right now, more than 1.4 million Palestinians are sheltering in UNRWA facilities, and thousands of its staff are involved in the humanitarian response in Gaza.

The need for this critical work to continue is why Australia welcomed UNRWA's swift response to recent allegations, including terminating staff and launching an investigation and a broader independent review.

We are now working with a number of other major contributors to make clear to UNRWA it needs to demonstrate strong, transparent and accountable leadership for the international community to move forward together.

While this work is being done, Australia and fourteen other countries including Canada, Japan, the Netherlands and Sweden are temporarily pausing funding.

For Australia, this means the recently announced \$6 million in additional funding for UNRWA has been temporarily paused.

It does not affect Australia's annual core funding of \$20.6 million – core funding that was doubled by this Government, and which has already been provided for this financial year.

Since the beginning of this conflict Australia has committed \$46.5 million in humanitarian assistance. This full amount will be delivered.

Finally, I restate the Australian Government's grave concerns about an impending major Israeli ground offensive in Rafah.

This would bring further devastation to the million civilians seeking shelter in Rafah, many there by Israel's direction.

Large scale military operations in densely populated risk extensive civilian casualties.

Australia believes this would be unjustifiable.

Our message to Israel is listen to the world. Do not go down this path.

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES FM OPENING STATEMENT

I thank the Chair and the Committee.

I want to begin by updating Senators on our international engagements.

The Committee will be familiar with my travel as Foreign Minister – visiting 37 countries, including 9 more than once.

In the first half of this year, we are focused on bringing the world to Australia.

Already this month we have already had visits by foreign and defence ministers from New Zealand and last week we had the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea address the Australian Parliament.

Over the weekend in Perth, I hosted the Indian Ocean Conference, attended by the President of Sri Lanka, and ministers from Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Japan, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nepal, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Tonga, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Vietnam.

And next month, the Prime Minister hosts Southeast Asian leaders at the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in Melbourne.

Last week we were all appalled and outraged by the suspended death sentence received by Australian citizen, Dr Yang Jun, in Beijing.

The Australian Government has conveyed our objections to the Chinese Government at senior levels.

All Australians want to see Dr Yang reunited with his family. We will persist in our advocacy.

And through the dialogue we have rebuilt, we will pursue the full range of our national interests in our engagement with China.

Senators, my recent travel to the Middle East reinforced that Australia is a respected voice, even if we are not a central player in that region.

And the Government is using Australia's voice to advocate for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and a pathway out of this conflict.

We want to see the release of hostages, the upholding of international law and protection of civilians.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is dire and getting worse.

The linchpin of humanitarian support there is UNRWA. It does life-saving work.

However, the recent allegations against UNRWA staff are serious and can't be ignored.

UNRWA's life-saving work is why Australian Governments - of both stripes - have provided funding to UNRWA since 1951.

Right now, nearly 1.7 million Palestinians are sheltering in UNRWA facilities, and thousands of its staff are involved in the humanitarian response in Gaza.

The need for this critical work to continue is why Australia welcomed UNRWA's swift response to recent allegations, including terminating staff and launching an investigation and a broader independent review.

We are now working with a number of other major contributors to make clear to UNRWA it needs to demonstrate strong, transparent and accountable leadership for the international community to move forward together.

While this work is being done, Australia and fourteen other countries including Canada, Japan, the Netherlands and Sweden are temporarily pausing funding.

For Australia, this means the recently announced \$6 million in additional funding for UNRWA has been temporarily paused.

It does not affect Australia's annual core funding of \$20.6 million – core funding that was doubled by this Government, and which has already been provided for this financial year.

Since the beginning of this conflict Australia has committed \$46.5 million in humanitarian assistance. This full amount will be delivered.

Finally, I restate the Australian Government's grave concerns about an impending major Israeli ground offensive in Rafah.

This would bring further devastation to more than a million civilians seeking shelter in Rafah, many there by Israel's direction.

Large scale military operations in densely populated risk extensive civilian casualties.

Australia believes this would be unjustifiable.

Our message to Israel is listen to the world. Do not go down this path.

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES FM OPENING STATEMENT

I thank the Chair and the Committee.

I want to begin by briefly updating Senators on our international engagements.

The Committee will be familiar with my travel as Foreign Minister – visiting some 37 countries, including 9 more than once.

In the first half of this year, we are focused on bringing the world to Australia.

We have already this month we have already had visits by foreign and defence ministers from New Zealand and last week we had the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea address the Australian Parliament.

Over the weekend in Perth, I hosted the Indian Ocean Conference, attended by the President of Sri Lanka, and ministers from Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Japan, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nepal, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Tonga, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Vietnam.

And next month, the Prime Minister hosts Southeast Asian leaders at the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in Melbourne.

Speaking of Southeast Asia, I wish to congratulate Indonesia on the successful conduct of its election yesterday.

While the formal count is continuing, early results indicate that Prabowo Subianto is well ahead.

Whoever the Indonesian people have chosen, we look forward to working closely with the next president when he is inaugurated in October.

As our Prime Minister has said, “there is no more important relationship than the relationship between our two great nations.”

Last week we were all appalled and outraged by the suspended death sentence received by Australian citizen, Dr Yang Jun, in Beijing.

The Australian Government has conveyed our objections to the Chinese Government at senior levels.

All Australians want to see Dr Yang reunited with his family. We will continue with and persist in our advocacy.

And through the dialogue we have rebuilt, we will pursue the full range of our national interests in our engagement with China.

Turning now to the Middle East. In my recent travel to the Middle East reinforced that Australia is a respected voice, even if we are not a central player in that region.

And the Government is using Australia's voice to advocate for a pathway out of this conflict and an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

We want to see the release of hostages, the upholding of international law and protection of civilians.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is dire and getting worse.

The linchpin of humanitarian support there is UNRWA. It does life-saving work.

However, the recent allegations against UNRWA staff are serious and can't be ignored.

UNRWA's life-saving work is why Australian Governments - of both stripes - have provided funding to UNRWA since 1951.

Right now, nearly 1.7 million Palestinians are sheltering in UNRWA facilities, and thousands of its staff are involved in the humanitarian response in Gaza.

The need for this critical work to continue is why Australia welcomed UNRWA's swift response to recent allegations, including terminating staff and launching an investigation and a broader independent review.

Australia is now working with a number of other major contributors to make clear to UNRWA it needs to demonstrate strong, transparent and accountable leadership for the international community to move forward together.

While this work is being done, Australia and 14 other countries including Canada, Japan, the Netherlands and Sweden are temporarily pausing funding.

For Australia, this means the recently announced \$6 million in additional funding for UNRWA has been temporarily paused.

I want to emphasise, this does not affect Australia's annual core funding of \$20.6 million – core funding that was doubled by this Government, and which has already been provided for this financial year.

Since the beginning of this conflict Australia has committed \$46.5 million in humanitarian assistance. This full amount will be delivered.

Finally, I wish to restate the Australian Government's grave concerns about an impending major Israeli ground offensive in Rafah.

This would bring further devastation to more than a million civilians seeking shelter in Rafah, many there by Israel's direction.

Large scale military operations in densely populated areas risk extensive civilian casualties.

Australia believes this would be unjustifiable.

Our message to Israel is listen to the world. Do not go down this path.

Thank you.

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES FM OPENING STATEMENT

I thank the Chair and the Committee.

I want to begin by updating Senators on our international engagements.

The Committee will be familiar with my travel as Foreign Minister – visiting 37 countries, including 9 more than once.

In the first half of this year, we are focused on bringing the world to Australia.

Already this month we have already had visits by foreign and defence ministers from New Zealand and last week we had the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea address the Australian Parliament.

Over the weekend in Perth, I hosted the Indian Ocean Conference, attended by the President of Sri Lanka, and ministers from Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Japan, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nepal, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Tonga, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Vietnam.

And next month, the Prime Minister hosts Southeast Asian leaders at the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in Melbourne.

Speaking of Southeast Asia, I want to congratulate Indonesia on the successful conduct of its election yesterday.

While the formal count is continuing, early results indicate that Prabowo Subianto is well ahead.

Whoever the Indonesian people choose, we look forward to working closely with the next president when he is inaugurated in October.

As our Prime Minister has said, “there is no more important relationship than the relationship between our two great nations.”

Last week we were all appalled and outraged by the suspended death sentence received by Australian citizen, Dr Yang Jun, in Beijing.

The Australian Government has conveyed our objections to the Chinese Government at senior levels.

All Australians want to see Dr Yang reunited with his family. We will persist in our advocacy.

And through the dialogue we have rebuilt, we will pursue the full range of our national interests in our engagement with China.

Senators, my recent travel to the Middle East reinforced that Australia is a respected voice, even if we are not a central player in that region.

And the Government is using Australia's voice to advocate for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and a pathway out of this conflict.

We want to see the release of hostages, the upholding of international law and protection of civilians.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is dire and getting worse.

The linchpin of humanitarian support there is UNRWA. It does life-saving work.

However, the recent allegations against UNRWA staff are serious and can't be ignored.

UNRWA's life-saving work is why Australian Governments - of both stripes - have provided funding to UNRWA since 1951.

Right now, nearly 1.7 million Palestinians are sheltering in UNRWA facilities, and thousands of its staff are involved in the humanitarian response in Gaza.

The need for this critical work to continue is why Australia welcomed UNRWA's swift response to recent allegations, including terminating staff and launching an investigation and a broader independent review.

We are now working with a number of other major contributors to make clear to UNRWA it needs to demonstrate strong, transparent and accountable leadership for the international community to move forward together.

While this work is being done, Australia and fourteen other countries including Canada, Japan, the Netherlands and Sweden are temporarily pausing funding.

For Australia, this means the recently announced \$6 million in additional funding for UNRWA has been temporarily paused.

It does not affect Australia's annual core funding of \$20.6 million – core funding that was doubled by this Government, and which has already been provided for this financial year.

Since the beginning of this conflict Australia has committed \$46.5 million in humanitarian assistance. This full amount will be delivered.

Finally, I restate the Australian Government's grave concerns about an impending major Israeli ground offensive in Rafah.

This would bring further devastation to more than a million civilians seeking shelter in Rafah, many there by Israel's direction.

Large scale military operations in densely populated risk extensive civilian casualties.

Australia believes this would be unjustifiable.

Our message to Israel is listen to the world. Do not go down this path.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS FOR THE
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA
THE HONOURABLE DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM
GARETH EVANS ORATION
THURSDAY, 7 MARCH 2024**

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attending today's event.

It's a pleasure to be here today at the Gareth Evans Oration.

And I'm honoured to have been invited to introduce our speaker, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia.

Prime Minister – thank you very much for being here today to give the Gareth Evans Oration, and indeed thank you for being here in Australia for the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, which concluded in Melbourne yesterday.

I will introduce you to the stage in just a moment.

But first I wanted to say something about Gareth Evans, given this oration is named in his honour.

Gareth's genius – I'm pretty sure I can use that word without causing him to blush – was and is to see no inherent limit to the potential for Australian influence in our region and around the world.

Australia isn't a major power, a country that **has** to be listened to and worked with because of the sheer size of population, economy or military or industrial weight.

But like many of our Southeast Asian neighbours, we are a middle power with a lot to offer the world, and our region.

And being a middle power, we also have to be more clever about how we advance our interests, in peace, stability and prosperity.

We have to be more clever and strategic in how we ensure our region enjoys a strategic balance where small and medium countries aren't dominated by major powers and we can all decide our own destinies.

Gareth was never burdened by the assumption of a small Australia...

...and he still imagines our capacity for influence on the regional and global stage in the boldest terms.

Indeed, Gareth's capacity for influence is perhaps no more evident than in his work to develop the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements that helped bring peace to Cambodia.

Australia's creative role in those talks is still spoken of in the highest terms—by the Cambodian government, by opposition groups, by civil society and so many others in that country and across our region.

It was and remains one of Australia's greatest diplomatic achievements—an extraordinary contribution to peace in our region—and Gareth was at the very centre of it.

Those efforts were emblematic of Gareth's view of Australian foreign policy: that we should imagine ourselves as a place with much to offer the world.

Not as a provincial former colony, with our sights set in the rearview mirror.

But as a confident, ambitious, diverse nation, our gaze lifted to the horizon, seeking to make a positive contribution in the world.

Because we have – and must continue to develop – a capacity to take the world as it is and shape it for the better.

And I hope many of the students in this room will be part of your legacy in one way or another.

So thank you, Gareth—most of all for your belief that Australia is a country with much to offer.

But as we know, we have another great statesman here with us today - Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

Prime Minister, as a proud Australian born in Sabah of Malaysian heritage, it is a particular honour for me to introduce you today.

No-one here needs me to spell out the details of your long political career.

Instead, if you will permit, the observation I would make in bringing you to the lectern is on the profound influence you have had not only on Malaysia...

... but more broadly on the development of democracy across the region.

You survived your own particular political purgatory.

But notwithstanding the political and personal difficulties you faced, you never lost your influence – indeed, you have only become more influential, and your ability to inspire has become ever greater.

Without taking anything away from your past, present and future achievements in office...

... it is fair to describe you as one of that vanishingly rare species of politician who has been profoundly influential not only in office, but also in opposition.

Not only when you have held the levers of national power, but also when you most decidedly have not.

You've lived the life of a true democrat.

You've been able to grow and learn throughout the most adverse circumstances...

... and you have shaped the character of the national and regional polity in profound ways.

Malaysia, Australia, all of the countries of our region have had their own specific development paths.

Many nations have been shaped by powerful independence personalities whose lives will forever be tied to the struggle of their nations for freedom and self-rule.

You, though, have played a profound and unique role in Malaysia's history...

...in the development of its democracy, its political practice, and the way it defines its own path in Southeast Asia.

As an advocate for pluralism and respect in troubling times—a message that we must continue to heed today.

I want to emphasise this point: pluralism and respect in our democracies.

Here in Australia, we are seeing people who claim to champion human rights and justice behaving in ways that show little regard for either.

Any decent person looks at the conflict in the Middle East with horror.

The status quo has failed everyone. The only way we get to a durable peace that assures the security of Israelis and Palestinians alike is with an independent Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

Tragically that seems further away than ever, and of course while Australia is a respected voice in the Middle East, we are not a central player there.

But we are using Australia's voice to advocate for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and humanitarian access, the release of hostages, and for the protection of civilians.

We are providing \$46.5 million in humanitarian assistance, for food, water, medicine and shelter. And we will be providing more urgent support soon.

But despite the constructive ways Australia is using our voice and contributing to the humanitarian response, we continue to see people displaying reckless disregard for these facts, and a shocking lack of respect for each other.

Shocking attempts at intimidation and character assassination.

This is not a country where you have to adopt the position of one side or another side.

This is not a country where you have to choose between Israelis or Palestinians.

This is a country where we people can care about the Middle East, while also acknowledging trauma on all sides and the nuance that is needed to navigate a way out of a conflict that has been intractable for decades.

We are a pluralist country, allowing for many different viewpoints, where we are united by respect for each other's humanity and for each other's right to live in peace – united by respect for each other's humanity.

That respect is fundamental to ensuring we never reproduce such disastrous conflict in our own country.

And you, Prime Minister, while leading a very different country – with a Muslim majority – have sought to make space for the plurality of views that is central to a democracy which values all citizens.

Whether it be your support for the right of Israel to exist and a two-state solution, or your advocacy for Christians in Malaysia following the attack on All Saints Church in Taiping.

Across the years, you have been a great friend to Australia – so I'm very glad that you've been able to come here today...

...to re-affirm our continued ties, and the long and distinguished links of cooperation and friendship in so many areas.

I look forward to working with you to further our cooperation, not least to support your personal goal to strengthen Malaysia's democratic institutions.

Democracy is always a work in progress—and progress comes with many setbacks, as you know better than anyone in this room.

But democracy's enduring wisdom is in its ability to evolve to tackle new challenges, as human society itself continues to change.

So thank you for coming today, and for returning to Australia.

You are a welcome guest in our country, and it is our honour to host you here today.

As the Malaysian saying goes:

*“Ke bukit sama didaki, ke laut sama direnangi.”**

When you are ready, Dato Seri, I'd invite you to the podium to deliver the 2024 Gareth Evans Oration.

Thank you.

1400 words inc grey / Approx. 10 mins

*Literal translation – "To the hill we climb, to the ocean we swim, together." Meaning - a very close friendship that cannot be broken.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS FOR THE
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA
THE HONOURABLE DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM
GARETH EVANS ORATION
THURSDAY, 7 MARCH 2024**

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attending today.

It's a pleasure to be here today at the Gareth Evans Oration.

And I'm honoured to have been invited to introduce our speaker, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia.

Prime Minister – thank you very much for being here today to give the Gareth Evans Oration, and indeed thank you for being here in Australia for the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, which concluded in Melbourne yesterday.

I will introduce you to the stage in just a moment.

But first I wanted to say something about Gareth Evans, given this oration is named in his honour.

Gareth's has never seen any inherent limit to the potential for Australian influence in our region and around the world.

Australia isn't a major power, a country that **has** to be listened to and worked with because of the sheer size of population, economy or military or industrial weight.

But like our Southeast Asian neighbours, our size does not reflect how much we have to offer our region and the world.

Yet it does mean we have to be more clever about how we advance our interests, in peace, stability and prosperity.

We have to be more strategic in how we ensure our region enjoys a strategic balance where small and medium countries aren't dominated by major powers and we can all decide our own destinies.

Gareth was never burdened by the assumption of a limited or small Australia...

His capacity for influence is perhaps no more evident than in his work to develop the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements that helped bring peace to Cambodia.

Australia's creative role in those talks is still spoken of in the highest terms—by the Cambodian government, by opposition groups, by citizens and civil society and so many others across our region.

It was and remains one of Australia's greatest diplomatic achievements.

It is a template for taking the world as it is and shaping it for the better.

And I hope many of the students in this room will be part of your legacy in one way or another.

We have another great statesman here with us today -
Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

Prime Minister, as a proud Australian born in Sabah of
Malaysian heritage, it is a particular honour for me to introduce
you today.

No-one here needs me to spell out the details of your long
political career.

Instead, if you will permit, the observation I would make in
bringing you to the lectern is on the profound influence you
have had not only on Malaysia...

... but more broadly on the development of democracy across
the region.

You survived your own particular political purgatory.

But notwithstanding the political and personal difficulties you
faced, you never lost your influence – indeed, you have only

become more influential, and your ability to inspire has become ever greater.

Without taking anything away from your past, present and future achievements in office...

... it is fair to describe you as one of that vanishingly rare species of politician who has been profoundly influential not only in office, but also in opposition.

Not only when you have held the levers of national power, but also when you most decidedly have not.

You've lived the life of a true democrat.

You've been able to grow and learn throughout the most adverse circumstances...

... and you have shaped the character of the national and regional polity in profound ways.

Malaysia, Australia, all of the countries of our region have had their own specific development paths.

Many nations have been shaped by powerful independence personalities whose lives will forever be tied to the struggle of their nations for freedom and self-rule.

You, though, have played a profound and unique role in Malaysia's history...

...in the development of its democracy, its political practice, and the way it defines its own path in Southeast Asia.

As an advocate for pluralism and respect in troubling times—a message that we should emphasise today today.

Here in Australia, we are seeing people who claim to champion human rights and justice behaving in ways that show little regard for either.

Any decent person looks at the conflict in the Middle East with horror.

The status quo has failed everyone. The only way we get to a durable peace that assures the security of Israelis and Palestinians alike is with an independent Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

Tragically that seems further away than ever, and of course while Australia is a respected voice in the Middle East, we are not a central player there.

But we are using Australia's voice to advocate for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and humanitarian access, the release of hostages, and for the protection of civilians.

We are providing \$46.5 million in humanitarian assistance, for food, water, medicine and shelter, with more to come.

But we continue to see people displaying reckless disregard for these facts, and a shocking lack of respect for each other.

Shocking attempts at intimidation and character assassination.

This is not a country where you have to adopt the position of one side or another side.

We are a pluralist country, allowing for many different viewpoints, where we are united by respect for each other's humanity and for each other's right to live in peace – united by respect for each other's humanity.

That respect is fundamental to ensuring we never reproduce such disastrous conflict in our own country.

This is a country where we people can care about the Middle East, while also acknowledging trauma on all sides and the nuance that is needed to navigate a way out of a conflict that has been intractable for decades.

And Prime Minister, I acknowledge your efforts at pluralism while leading a very different country – not least your support for the right of Israel to exist and a two-state solution, or your advocacy for Christians in Malaysia following the attack on All Saints Church in Taiping.

Across the years, you have been a great friend to Australia – so I'm very glad that you've been able to come here today...

...to re-affirm our continued ties, and the long and distinguished links of cooperation and friendship in so many areas.

I look forward to working with you to further our cooperation, not least to support your personal goal to strengthen Malaysia's democratic institutions.

Democracy is always a work in progress—and progress comes with many setbacks, as you know better than anyone in this room.

But democracy's enduring wisdom is in its ability to evolve to tackle new challenges, as human society itself continues to change.

So thank you for coming today, and for returning to Australia.

You are a welcome guest in our country, and it is our honour to host you here today.

As the Malaysian saying goes:

*“Ke bukit sama didaki, ke laut sama direnangi.”**

When you are ready, Dato Seri, I'd invite you to the podium to deliver the 2024 Gareth Evans Oration.

Thank you.

1400 words inc grey / Approx. 10 mins

*Literal translation – "To the hill we climb, to the ocean we swim, together." Meaning - a very close friendship that cannot be broken.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS FOR THE
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA
THE HONOURABLE DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM
GARETH EVANS ORATION
THURSDAY, 7 MARCH 2024**

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attending today.

It's a pleasure to be here today at the Gareth Evans Oration.

And I'm honoured to have been invited to introduce our speaker, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia.

Prime Minister – thank you very much for being here today to give the Gareth Evans Oration, and indeed thank you for being here in Australia for the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, which concluded in Melbourne yesterday.

I will introduce you to the stage in just a moment.

But first I wanted to say something about Gareth Evans, given this oration is named in his honour.

Gareth has never seen any inherent limit to the potential for Australian influence in our region and around the world.

Australia isn't a major power, a country that **has** to be listened to and worked with because of the sheer size of population, economy or military or industrial weight.

But like our Southeast Asian neighbours, our size does not reflect how much we have to offer our region and the world.

Yet it does mean we have to be more clever about how we advance our interests, in peace, stability and prosperity.

We have to be more strategic in how we ensure our region enjoys a strategic balance where small and medium countries aren't dominated by major powers and we can all decide our own destinies.

Gareth was never burdened by the assumption of a limited or small Australia.

His capacity for influence is perhaps no more evident than in his work to develop the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements that helped bring peace to Cambodia.

Australia's creative role in those talks and our support for the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia is still spoken of in the highest terms—by the Cambodian government, by opposition groups, by citizens and civil society and so many others across our region and the world.

It was and remains one of Australia's greatest diplomatic achievements.

It is a template for taking the world as it is and shaping it for the better.

And I hope many of the students in this room will be part of your legacy in one way or another.

We have another great statesman here with us today -
Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

Prime Minister, as a proud Australian born in Sabah of
Malaysian heritage, it is a particular honour for me to introduce
you today.

No-one here needs me to spell out the details of your long
political career.

Instead, if you will permit, the observation I would make in
bringing you to the lectern is on the profound influence you
have had not only on Malaysia...

... but more broadly on the development of democracy across
the region.

You survived your own particular political purgatory.

But notwithstanding the political and personal difficulties you faced, you never lost your influence – indeed, you have only become more influential, and your ability to inspire has become ever greater.

Without taking anything away from your past, present and future achievements in office...

... it is fair to describe you as one of that vanishingly rare species of politician who has been profoundly influential not only in office, but also in opposition.

Not only when you have held the levers of national power, but also when you most decidedly have not.

You've lived the life of a true democrat.

You've been able to grow and learn throughout the most adverse circumstances...

... and you have shaped the character of the national and regional polity in profound ways.

Malaysia, Australia, all of the countries of our region have had their own specific development paths.

Many nations have been shaped by powerful independence personalities whose lives will forever be tied to the struggle of their nations for freedom and self-rule.

You, though, have played a profound and unique role in Malaysia's history...

...in the development of its democracy, its political practice, and the way it defines its own path in Southeast Asia.

As an advocate for respect and tolerance in troubling times—a message that we should emphasise today.

Here in Australia, we are seeing people who claim to champion human rights and justice behaving in ways that show little regard for either.

Shocking attempts at intimidation and character assassination. Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

This is not a country where you have to adopt the position of one side or another side.

This is a country where we people can care about the Middle East, acknowledging deep trauma on all sides and the nuance that is needed to navigate a way out of a conflict that has been intractable for decades.

We are a pluralist country, allowing for many different viewpoints, where we are united by respect for each other's humanity and for each other's right to live in peace – united by respect for each other's humanity.

That respect is fundamental to ensuring we never reproduce such disastrous conflict in our own country.

And Prime Minister, I acknowledge your efforts at pluralism while leading a very different country – not least your support for the right of Israel to exist and a two-state solution, or your advocacy for Christians in Malaysia following the attack on All Saints Church in Taiping.

Across the years, you have been a great friend to Australia – so I'm very glad that you've been able to come here today...

...to re-affirm our continued ties, and the long and distinguished links of cooperation and friendship in so many areas.

I look forward to working with you to further our cooperation, not least to support your personal goal to strengthen Malaysia's democratic institutions.

Democracy is always a work in progress—and progress comes with many setbacks, as you know better than anyone in this room.

But democracy's enduring wisdom is in its ability to evolve to tackle new challenges, as human society itself continues to change.

So thank you for coming today, and for returning to Australia.

You are a welcome guest in our country, and it is our honour to host you here today.

As the Malaysian saying goes:

“Ke bukit sama didaki, ke laut sama direnangi.”*

When you are ready, Dato Seri, I'd invite you to the podium to deliver the 2024 Gareth Evans Oration.

Thank you.

1400 words inc grey / Approx. 10 mins

*Literal translation – "To the hill we climb, to the ocean we swim, together." Meaning - a very close friendship that cannot be broken.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS FOR THE
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA
THE HONOURABLE DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM
GARETH EVANS ORATION
THURSDAY, 7 MARCH 2024**

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attending today.

I acknowledge the many distinguished guests, including members of the diplomatic corps.

It's a pleasure to be here today at the Gareth Evans Oration, and I acknowledge the man himself, as well as a successor to him and predecessor for me, Julie Bishop.

Having two such esteemed foreign ministers here really does feel like I'm back at university, presenting to professors.

And most importantly, Prime Minister – thank you very much for being here today to give the Gareth Evans Oration, and indeed thank you for being here in Australia for the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, which concluded in Melbourne yesterday.

I will introduce you to the stage in just a moment.

But first I wanted to say something the about Gareth Evans.

Gareth has never seen any inherent limit to the potential for Australian influence in our region and around the world.

Australia isn't one of the great powers, a country that **has** to be listened to and worked with because of the sheer size of population, economy or military or industrial weight.

But like our Southeast Asian neighbours, our size does not reflect how much we have to offer our region and the world.

Yet it does mean we have to be more clever about how we advance our interests, in peace, stability and prosperity.

We have to be more strategic in how we ensure our region enjoys a strategic balance where small and medium countries aren't dominated by major powers and we can all decide our own destinies.

Gareth was never burdened by the assumption of a limited or small Australia.

His capacity for influence is perhaps no more evident than in his work to develop the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements that helped bring peace to Cambodia.

Australia's creative role in those talks and our support for the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia is still spoken of in the highest terms—by the Cambodian government, by opposition groups, by citizens and civil society and so many others across our region and the world.

It was and remains one of Australia's greatest diplomatic achievements.

It is a template for taking the world as it is and shaping it for the better.

And I hope many of the students in this room will be part of your legacy in one way or another.

Now, we have another great statesman here with us today - Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

Prime Minister, as a proud Sabahan-Australian, it is a particular honour for me to introduce you today.

No-one here needs me to spell out the details of your long political career.

Instead, if you will permit, the observation I would make in bringing you to the lectern is on the profound influence you have had not only on Malaysia...

... but more broadly on the development of democracy across the region.

You survived your own particular political purgatory.

But notwithstanding the political and personal difficulties you faced, you never lost your influence – indeed, you have only become more influential, and your ability to inspire has become ever greater.

Without taking anything away from your past, present and future achievements in office...

... it is fair to describe you as one of that vanishingly rare species of politician who has been profoundly influential not only in office, but also in opposition.

Not only when you have held the levers of national power, but also when you most decidedly have not.

You've lived the life of a true democrat.

... and you have shaped the character of the national and regional polity in profound ways.

Malaysia, Australia, all of the countries of our region have had their own paths.

Many nations have been shaped by powerful independence personalities whose lives will forever be tied to the struggle of their nations for freedom and self-rule.

You, though, have played a profound and unique role in Malaysia's history...

...in the development of its democracy, its political practice, and the way it defines its own path in Southeast Asia.

As an advocate for respect and tolerance in troubling times—a message that we should emphasise today.

Here in Australia, we are seeing people who claim to champion human rights and justice behaving in ways that show little regard for either.

Shocking attempts at intimidation and character assassination.

Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

From the outset of the current conflict, I have talked about the need for us all to work together to ensure that the distress in our community does not turn into hatred.

But some are intent on reproducing hatred and social conflict here - pushing absolutist agendas ahead of respect for the nuanced and peaceful disagreement that healthy democracy demands.

This is not a country where you have to adopt the position of one side or another side.

We are a pluralist country, allowing for many different viewpoints, where we are united by respect for each other's humanity and for each other's right to live in peace – united by respect for each other's humanity.

And Prime Minister, I acknowledge your commitment to pluralist democracy while leading a very different country – not least your support for the right of Israel to exist and a two-state solution, or your advocacy for Christians in Malaysia following the attack on All Saints Church in Taiping.

Across the years, you have been a great friend to Australia.

I look forward to working with you to further our cooperation, not least to support your personal goal to strengthen Malaysia's democratic institutions.

Democracy is always a work in progress—and progress comes with many setbacks, as you know better than anyone in this room.

But democracy's enduring wisdom is in its ability to evolve to tackle new challenges, as human society itself continues to change.

So thank you for coming today, and for returning to Australia.

You are a welcome guest in our country, and it is our honour to host you here today.

As the Malaysian saying goes:

“Ke bukit sama didaki, ke laut sama direnangi.”*

When you are ready, Dato Seri, I'd invite you to the podium to deliver the 2024 Gareth Evans Oration.

Thank you.

1050 words / Approx. 7 mins

*Literal translation – "To the hill we climb, to the ocean we swim, together." Meaning - a very close friendship that cannot be broken.

**SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS FOR THE
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA
THE HONOURABLE DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM
GARETH EVANS ORATION
THURSDAY, 7 MARCH 2024**

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet, and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attending today.

I acknowledge the many distinguished guests, including members of the diplomatic corps.

In particular I acknowledge my counterpart the Malaysian Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Malaysian Minister of Youth and Sports.

It's a pleasure to be here today at the Gareth Evans Oration, and I acknowledge the man himself, as well as a successor to him and predecessor for me, Julie Bishop.

Thank you, Julie for your generous introduction.

Having two such esteemed previous foreign ministers here really does feel like being back at university, presenting to professors.

And most importantly, Prime Minister – thank you very much for being here today to give the Gareth Evans Oration, and indeed thank you for being here in Australia for the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, which concluded in Melbourne yesterday.

I will introduce you to the stage in just a moment.

But first I wanted to say something the about Gareth Evans.

Gareth has never seen any inherent limit to the potential for Australian influence in our region and around the world.

Australia isn't one of the great powers, a country that **has** to be listened to and worked with because of the sheer size of population, economy or military or industrial weight.

But like our Southeast Asian neighbours, our size does not reflect how much we have to offer our region and the world.

Yet it does mean we have to be more clever about how we advance our interests, in peace, stability and prosperity.

We have to be more strategic in how we ensure our region enjoys a strategic balance where small and medium countries aren't dominated by major powers and we can all decide our own destinies.

Gareth was never limited by the assumption of a small Australia.

His capacity for influence is perhaps no more evident than in his work to develop the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements that helped bring peace to Cambodia.

Australia's creative role in those talks and our support for the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia is still spoken of in the highest terms—by the Cambodian government, by opposition groups, by citizens and civil society and so many others across our region and the world.

It was and remains one of Australia's greatest diplomatic achievements.

It is a template for taking the world as it is and shaping it for the better.

And I hope many of the students in this room will be part of your legacy in one way or another.

Now, we have another great statesman here with us today - Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

And I begin by recognising you join us on the eve of the tenth anniversary of the disappearance of MH370.

While the searches have not been successful, and families continue to endure such heartache, the efforts to find MH370 demonstrate the close cooperation between our countries through difficult times.

Prime Minister, as a proud Sabahan-Australian, it is a particular honour for me to introduce you today.

In doing so I want to recognise the profound influence you have had not only on Malaysia...

... but more broadly on the development of democracy across the region.

You survived your own particular political purgatory.

But notwithstanding the political and personal difficulties you faced, you never lost your influence – indeed, you have only become more influential, and your ability to inspire has become ever greater.

Without taking anything away from your past, present and future achievements in office...

... it is fair to describe you as one of that vanishingly rare species of politician who has been profoundly influential not only in office, but also in opposition.

Not only when you have held the levers of national power, but also when you most decidedly have not.

You've had the courage to live the life of a true democrat.

... and you have shaped the character of the national and regional polity in profound ways.

Malaysia, Australia, all of the countries of our region have had their own paths.

Many nations have been shaped by powerful independence personalities whose lives will forever be tied to the struggle of their nations for freedom and self-rule.

You, though, have played a unique role in Malaysia's history...

...in the development of its democracy, its political practice, and the way it defines its own path in Southeast Asia.

As an advocate for respect and tolerance in troubling times—a message that we should emphasise today.

We both live in countries that have communities deeply affected by the conflict in the Middle East.

And while neither of our countries are in the Middle East, we both have voices that are respected there.

It is so important for us to continue to use our voices to advocate for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and humanitarian access, the release of hostages, and for the protection of civilians.

To use our voices for a pathway out of this conflict and an enduring peace, with an independent Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

Just as we continue to promote peaceful and respectful dialogue at home.

Here in Australia, we are seeing people who claim to champion human rights and justice behaving in ways that show little regard for either.

Shocking attempts at intimidation and character assassination.

Blatant antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Some are intent on reproducing hatred and social conflict here - pushing absolutist agendas ahead of respect for peaceful disagreement that healthy democracy demands.

This is not a country where you should be pushed to adopt an absolutist position of one side or another side.

We are a pluralist country, allowing for many different viewpoints, where we are united by respect for each other's humanity and for each other's right to live in peace – united by respect for each other's humanity.

Prime Minister, across the years, you have been a great friend to Australia.

I look forward to working with you to further our cooperation, not least to support your personal goal to strengthen Malaysia's democratic institutions.

Democracy is always a work in progress—and progress comes with many setbacks, as you know better than anyone in this room.

But democracy's enduring wisdom is in its ability to evolve to tackle new challenges, as human society itself continues to change.

So thank you for coming today, and for returning to Australia.

You are a welcome guest in our country, and it is our honour to host you here today.

As the Malaysian saying goes:

'Ke bukit sama didaki, ke lurah sama dituruni'

Dato Seri, I'd invite you to the podium to deliver the 2024 Gareth Evans Oration.

Thank you.

1120 words / Approx 7-8 mins

*Translation – "To the hill we climb, to the ocean we swim, together." Meaning - a very close friendship that cannot be broken.