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Albanese Skipped Trump Meeting in U.S., Pezzullo Criticizes Decision

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Former Australian Home Affairs Secretary Mike Pezzullo has criticized Prime Minister Anthony Albanese for not shortening his China trip to make a diplomatic stopover in the United States and meet with former President Donald Trump.

Former Department of Home Affairs Secretary Mike Pezzullo has stirred debate by suggesting that Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese should have cut short his diplomatic visit to China in 2023 to meet with former United States President Donald Trump.

Pezzullo, a longtime public servant with deep experience in national security and foreign affairs, made the remarks during a recent public discussion on Australia's international positioning. He argued that Albanese missed a strategic opportunity to engage with Trump, who is currently a leading contender for the 2024 U.S. presidential election.

According to Pezzullo, it would have been wise for the Prime Minister to stop over in the United States on his return trip from China. "You go to Beijing, you shake hands with President Xi Jinping, and then you get back on the plane, fly to the U.S., and meet with Donald Trump," he said. Pezzullo believes that even an informal meeting could have helped strengthen Australia's position by maintaining ties with both sides of American politics.

His comments come amid growing uncertainty over the future of U.S. foreign policy, particularly if Trump is re-elected. Pezzullo noted that building relationships with potential future leaders is a crucial part of long-term diplomacy. While Albanese did meet with current President Joe Biden during the same period, Pezzullo argued that this should not exclude dialogue with Trump's camp, given his influence and chances of returning to power.

Pezzullo also raised broader concerns about Australia's need to navigate a changing global landscape. He suggested that avoiding contact with key political figures in Washington, even those not currently in office, could lead to strategic disadvantages, especially in the Indo-Pacific region where U.S.-China competition is escalating.

The suggestion has drawn mixed reactions. Critics argue that any meeting with Trump, particularly during an election cycle, could have been seen as political interference. Others believe Pezzullo's advice reflects a pragmatic approach to international relations, where preparing for all possible outcomes is essential.