



THE HON KEVIN RUDD MP

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
CANBERRA

23 MAY 2011

The Hon John Murphy MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Petitions  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Murphy

I refer to your letter of 16 March 2011 regarding a petition about Mr Julian Assange, submitted for the consideration of the Standing Committee on Petitions. I note the Committee's referral under Standing Order 209(b) of items 3 and 4 of the petition. My response follows.

Item 3 called upon me to summon the Ambassador for the United States of America to Australia and demarche him condemning the comments of American politician Ms Sarah Palin on Mr Assange. Item 4 called upon me to summon the Canadian High Commissioner to Australia and demarche him condemning the comments of Mr Tom Flanagan, former Senior Advisor to the Canadian Prime Minister, on Mr Assange.

The Australian Government deplores and condemns all calls to violence against any Australian citizen wherever and by whomever they are made. However, neither of the individuals in the petition cited are holders of public office in their respective countries so it would not be appropriate to demarche their governments through their diplomatic representatives on statements they are reported to have made. Both the United States of America and Canada have laws protecting the rights of individuals against threats to their person under which any concerns about these reported statements could be pursued.

I trust this information will be of assistance to the Committee in its consideration of the petition.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Rudd