

Marrickville Peace Group
c/- 17 Riverside Crescent
MARRICKVILLE
NSW 2204

21 September 2012

The Hon Julia Gillard
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

On 17 April 2012 (the Global Day of Action Against Military Spending), the Marrickville Peace Group joined a number of other NSW groups in writing to you under the banner of 'Keep War From Our Door'. The topic of the correspondence was the matter of the US garrison in Darwin, about which a number of questions were raised.

Since we have no information to the contrary, we make the assumption that the Darwin garrison was initiated at the invitation of the Australian government.

We believe that a very substantial proportion of the Australian population is totally perplexed as to why a decision to issue such an invitation was made.

This was a decision with very far-reaching, possible consequences. As it had the potential to affect this country's security, lengthy public scrutiny should have been part of the decision-making process. Surely, the prudent course of action would have been to put the proposition to the community, through their representatives in the Parliament?

However, there is no public evidence of any discussion of the decision within the government. There was no Parliamentary discussion. Instead, there was an announcement made by the leader of a foreign power in our democratic chamber. There has been no opportunity for a public discussion of the pros and cons with any hope of influencing the decision. It is a *fait accompli* despite its far-reaching consequences for all of us.

The small matter of the time it is taking for KWFOOD to receive answers to its reasonable questions could be interpreted as reluctance on the part of your Government to debate the matter with anyone.

From our perspective, inviting US military forces to maintain a lasting presence in Australia is tantamount to encouraging the US to further its own economic, strategic and political interests through its military might.

Today, the United Nations' International Day of Peace, is an appropriate day upon which to raise this most serious matter with you again, and seek your views. We act in concert with initiatives being taken today by many other groups across the nation, under the banner of the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN).

Yours sincerely

Nick Deane
On behalf of Marrickville Peace Group