



PRIME MINISTER  
CANBERRA

2 February 2007

MERICA

Thank you for your recent email about Mr David Hicks. I always appreciate young people writing to me about the issues that interest them.

There have been serious accusations made against Mr Hicks arising from acts allegedly committed by him whilst overseas. Mr Hicks was charged by United States (US) authorities in relation to these allegations for three offences: conspiracy to commit war crimes, attempted murder by an unprivileged belligerent and aiding the enemy.

The US Congress passed, on 29 September 2006, legislation to re-establish the military commission process. The Act was signed into law by US President George W Bush on 17 October 2006. The Act incorporates a number of due process safeguards, among them the presumption of innocence, a right to be present throughout the trial and a ban on evidence obtained by torture.

The Australian Government has on a number of occasions raised with the US Administration the issue of the new legislation and its impact on Mr Hicks' case. The government has made it clear to the US, including in discussions between myself and President Bush, that Mr Hicks should be brought to trial as soon as possible in relation to any charges against him.

Please accept my best wishes and every encouragement with your studies.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Howard', written in a cursive style.

(John Howard)