

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 7, 2020

The Honorable Arthur Sinodinos
Ambassador
Embassy of Australia
1145 17th St NW
Washington DC, 20036

Ambassador Sinodinos,

As Australia, along with the rest of the world, deals with the terrible human and economic consequences of COVID-19, we write to reaffirm our strong support for the U.S.-Australia alliance. For more than a century, our nations have stood side by side during moments of great peril. The current crisis is no different. Although the challenges we face are new, what has not changed is our shared commitment to our values and to our friends.

Given the tremendous toll COVID-19 has taken on the world, it is only natural that Australia – like all nations concerned with upholding best practices for global public health – would want an objective, scientific, evidence-based, and rigorous investigation into the origins of the virus. As Prime Minister Scott Morrison stated in calling for an independent review, “We’d like the world to be safer when it comes to viruses...I would hope that any other nation, be it China or anyone else, would share that objective.” Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong further emphasized that Australia must “press what is right, what we believe is right, for us and for the international community, and making sure that humanity understands how this virus started is the right thing to do.” We could not agree more.

Unfortunately, and not for the first time, Chinese government officials responded to these calls with deeply disturbing and thinly-disguised threats of retaliation. In an interview with the Australian Financial Review, Chinese Ambassador Cheng Jingye called such an inquiry “dangerous” and threatened economic retaliation along a number of fronts, including boycotts of Australian wine and beef. We unequivocally oppose this behavior and strongly support Foreign Minister Marise Payne’s rejection of “any suggestion that economic coercion is an appropriate response to a call for such an assessment.”

This incident is part of a broader and concerning pattern from the Chinese government. As we continue to confront this deadly disease and its consequences, we will be faced with many tough decisions, including those that may arise from the Chinese government’s continued lack of cooperation and transparency. One decision that is not difficult is to always stand with our Australian mates. No matter the external pressure or coercion, we will always have Australia’s back, just as Australia has always had ours.

Thank you for your hard work on behalf of the U.S.-Australia alliance. We look forward to continuing to work with you in support of our common interests and values.

In Mateship,



Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



James E. Risch
United States Senator



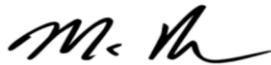
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Cory Gardner
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



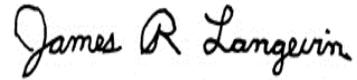
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United States Senator



David A. Perdue
United States Senator



Todd Young
United States Senator



Jim Langevin
Member of Congress



Liz Cheney
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Tom Cole
Member of Congress



Ed Case
Member of Congress



Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



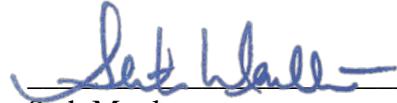
William R. Timmons IV
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Ron Wright
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Randy K. Weber
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Steve Stivers
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