



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K9

Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0K9

Philippe Dufresne
Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel
House of Commons
131 Queen Street, Room 07-02
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

April 20, 2021

Dear Mr. Dufresne,

On March 31, 2021, the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations set up by the House of Commons requested:

“all information and documents in the possession of the Public Health Agency of Canada or any subsidiary organizations relating to the transfer of Ebola and Henipah viruses to the Wuhan Institute of Virology in March of 2019 and the subsequent revocation of security clearances for, and termination of the employment of, Dr. Xiangguo Qiu and Keding Cheng, provided that:

(a) these documents shall be deposited with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, in an unredacted form, within 20 days of the adoption of this order;

(b) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel discuss with the committee, in an in camera meeting, information contained therein, which in his opinion, might reasonably be expected to compromise national security or reveal details of an ongoing criminal investigation, other than the existence of an investigation, so that the committee may determine which information is placed before a committee in public; and

(c) should the Public Health Agency of Canada not provide documents in their unredacted form within 20 days, the President of the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Acting Scientific Director General of the National Microbiology Laboratory be scheduled to appear for three hours before the committee, within 27 days of this motion passing, to explain why the documents were not provided”.

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This was in follow-up to questions posed to me and Dr. Guillaume Poliquin by this Committee on March 22, 2021.

The motion requesting the documents stated that the documents were to be deposited with you. Although documents were requested in an unredacted form, there are limits on the ability of the Government to disclose certain information in this context. Some information in those documents is confidential on various grounds and, as such, ought to remain protected.

Accordingly, redactions were applied for:

- Personal information
- Solicitor-client privilege
- Information the disclosure of which would be injurious to national security
- Confidential business information
- Other third party information the disclosure of which would be injurious
- Information outside the scope of the motion (irrelevant information)

Given the nature of information sought in the motion, I note in particular that, as stated in my letter to the Chair of the Special Committee on Canada-China relations dated March 26, 2021, the *Privacy Act* provides that personal information under the control of a government institution shall not, without the consent of the individual to whom it relates, be disclosed except in accordance with the circumstances described in s. 8(2) of the *Privacy Act*. Information related to why the two individuals are no longer employed is personal information, which cannot be disclosed in an unredacted form.

As previously stated, the two Public Health Agency of Canada employees that are the subject of this inquiry are no longer employed by the Public Health Agency of Canada. I can also confirm that to the best of my knowledge the fact that the Ebola and Henipah viruses were transferred to the Wuhan Institute of Virology from the National Microbiology Laboratory is not connected to the departure of the two employees from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

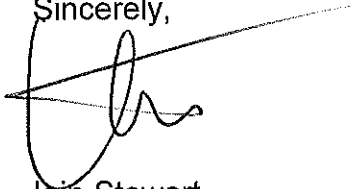
Therefore, in light of the above limitations in what can be shared with you and with Committee members, please find enclosed a series of documents (267 pages) that relate to the March 2019 transfer and the departure of the two employees.

Please note that documents that were fully redacted have not been included (279 pages). These documents were redacted for the reasons stated above.

We have also provided documents in both official languages, where available, and have sent the remaining documents (approximately 80%) that were available in only one official language, for translation. Due to time constraints, this translation will follow by May 14, 2021.

We would be pleased to appear again before the Committee to further discuss those matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Iain Stewart', written over a horizontal line that extends across the page.

Iain Stewart
President