



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

President

Président

Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K9

Ottawa (Ontario)
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The Honourable Geoff Regan, P.C., M.P.
Chair, Special Committee on Canada-China Relations
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

May 20th 2021

Dear Mr. Regan:

On May 10, 2021, the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations set up by the House of Commons adopted the following motion:

- *That the unredacted documents from the Public Health Agency of Canada be provided to the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel within 10 days to review and ascertain the fairness of them and should the documents not be provided, that the committee report the following to the House: Your committee recommends that an Order of the House do issue for all information and documents, in the care, custody or control of the Public Health Agency of Canada and subsidiary organizations, respecting the transfer of Ebola and Henipah viruses to the Wuhan Institute of Virology in March 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 be deposited, in both official languages, with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel no later than two weeks following the House's concurrence in this recommendation; (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 the committee in public.*

The motion followed the production, on April 20, 2021, of a set of documents by the Public Health Agency of Canada in response to the Committee's motion of March 31, 2021. This set contained partial redactions; the Committee was informed that a further set of documents was not being disclosed as they were redacted in their entirety.

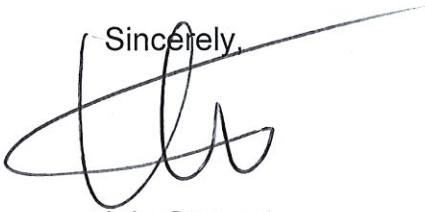
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As mentioned in my letter of April 20th to the Law Clerk, to the best of my knowledge the fact that the Ebola and Henipah viruses were transferred to the Wuhan Institute of Virology from the National Microbiology Laboratory is not connected to the departure of the two employees from the Public Health Agency of Canada. In addition, as discussed at the May 10th appearance, Dr. Guillaume Poliquin noted that there is no connection between these viruses and the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

It remains that the documents and information previously disclosed were carefully examined to ensure the most fulsome disclosure of information. Redactions were made taking into account countervailing laws, duties and public interest considerations. As requested, we have re-examined those disclosures, and have agreed that we can release additional information. The attached package of documents therefore includes additional material which had previously been redacted as irrelevant to the motion request (with corresponding French translations to follow by Friday May 28, 2021). However, the Public Health Agency of Canada remains obligated to safeguard certain sensitive information, particularly in the context of national security and in relation to employee privacy.

We share the Committee's interest in ensuring open and public government, in a manner that appropriately protects sensitive information, including national security information. To this end, we note that the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP) was established to review such matters, while ensuring appropriate safeguards. Members of that committee come from both houses of Parliament, hold appropriate security clearances and have express right of access to otherwise restricted information. We would welcome the opportunity to further explore this avenue with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Iain Stewart', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Iain Stewart

c.c. Mr. Phillippe Dufresne, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel
House of Commons