

Friday, April 4, 2008

His Excellency Lu Shumin  
Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Canada  
515 St. Patrick Street  
P.O. Box 8935  
New Terminal, Alta Vista  
Ottawa, Ontario  
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Your Excellency,

2008 is an important year for the image and reputation of China as a leading member of the international community. All eyes are on China as it prepares to host the world for the Summer Olympics. CBC/Radio-Canada is proud to be a partner in broadcasting the pageantry and excitement of these Games and, as backdrop, the tremendous social and economic strides that China is making to assert its role as a modern, engaged, global leader.

It is with this in mind that I call your attention to a matter of the gravest importance. You are aware, no doubt, that access to the two principal CBC/Radio-Canada websites, *Radio-Canada.ca* and *CBC.ca*, has been blocked in China. Our French site has been blocked for at least six months and our English site since January of this year.

As you may be aware, Canadian embassy officials in Beijing have raised this issue with your Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I am writing to request that you make formal and immediate enquiries as to why the sites have been blocked, and that you take steps to ensure that this policy is reversed.

CBC/Radio-Canada has maintained staff and a bureau in China for many years and, as Canada's public broadcaster, we are committed to freedom of the press. I took note of the remarks of Premier Wen Jiabao when he promised, in April 2007, that in the spirit of *One World, One Dream*, "the government will provide services of an Olympic standard to athlete, officials, spectators and the media in order to facilitate their participation and enjoyment of the Games. The freedom of foreign journalists in their news coverage will also be ensured." I understand that, in that spirit, access to the BBC's website, which had been restricted, has recently been unblocked. This is welcome.

Your Excellency, Canada and China have a long history built on our ability to share our culture with each other. That relationship depends on our ability to communicate. Blocking access to our websites is inconsistent with that history, and with China's growing place on the world stage. I would appreciate your personal commitment to resolving this problem as quickly as possible and ensuring that access to our programming is restored expeditiously.

Yours sincerely,

Hubert T. Lacroix  
President and CEO  
CBC/Radio-Canada

*Copies to:*

Hon. Josée Verner, PC, M.P.  
Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages

Hon. Maxime Bernier, PC, M.P.  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hon. Bob Rae, PC, MP  
Liberal Foreign Affairs Critic

Francine Lalonde, MP  
Bloc Foreign Affairs Critic

Paul Dewar, MP