

As you know, Radio Canada International advanced by ten months its program for Mandarin broadcasts into China, from next April to last week, and we will be exploring with them the possibility of increasing the length and the frequency of future broadcasts. We are not talking here of western propaganda, we are talking about the kind of straight news and information broadcasts that are standard Canadian fare. We leave it to Chinese listeners to make their own judgements about what is truth and what is not.

On the immigration front, we have attempted to respond to increased demand by beefing up our processing capacity in Beijing and Shanghai. We have to date been giving priority to students, and to the families of students and others here in Canada, and we will be looking at further measures as the weeks and months advance.

With respect to Chinese students here in Canada, the Government has already taken steps to respond to the uncertainty they have felt in light of the radically changed environment in their homeland.

I and my colleagues the Minister of Employment and Immigration and the Minister of External Relations and International Development have prepared a series of measures to address the situation of Chinese students here in Canada, their ability to support themselves while here, and their longer-term status. We have emphasized that we are willing to extend student Visas for a year and we have established mechanisms to ensure that work permits, job counselling services, and financial support will be in place for those who need it. At the same time, we are not encouraging Chinese students here to take hasty decisions. We are not pressuring them into definitively cutting their ties to China - we are simply saying that you are welcome during this period of uncertainty. If in the end they choose not to return to China, then we will look at individual cases sympathetically, but we continue to hope that the situation in China will encourage them to decide, at the end of their academic programs, to return to China, bring with them Canadian concepts, Canadian ways of doing things, and a healthy commitment to truth and the rule of law.

There is separate press material available on the programs being put in place with respect to the students and so I do not think there is any need for me to delve into the details here. I might add, however, that these programs are an excellent example of cooperation between a variety of communities here in Canada, cooperation made possible by the consultative process we have adopted in response to the events in China.