



June 3, 2009

907 Alness Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M3J 2J1  
Attention: Mr. Slava Levin  
Email: slavalevin@ethnicchannels.com  
Fax: 416-736-7677

Re: Approval of Al Jazeera English as received by the CRTC from Campaign for Democratic Media

On behalf of the Campaign for Democratic Media's (CDM) network of groups and individual members, we are writing in support of the approval of the Al Jazeera English's application to the CRTC to broadcast in Canada. An AJE Channel will help allow Canadians to choose a truly global news network from the overwhelming 500 channels that are currently available. CDM values the diversity and quality of global reporting Al Jazeera English would bring to the Canadian media landscape.

Al Jazeera staff have noted: "For years, the flow of information in the world has run from North to South, from rich countries to poor. The news agenda was set by media organizations of the West while the rest of the world, the majority of the world's population, had to live with the result. People in South America, in Africa, in the Middle East, had to see their news through the eyes of producers and presenters in Atlanta [headquarters for CNN] or London [BBC]" (AJE, "Q & A Al Jazeera English," Information Package p. 45). Al Jazeera, by contrast has four broadcasting centres: two in the global South (Doha and Kuala Lumpur) and two in the North (London and Washington) as well as 69 bureaus around the world, almost half of which are in the global South.

As a result of the diversity AJE brings both in front and behind the camera, Al Jazeera English has received the most compelling endorsements from a wide range of thoughtful media commentators. Roger Cohen, of the *New York Times*, nicely sums up the tremendous value of AJE: "*its striving for balanced reporting from a distinct perspective seems genuine*" (Roger Cohen, "Bring the Real World Home" *New York Times*, November 12, 2007). This distinct perspective is changing the flow of information from

North to South and involves hearing democratic voices from all sides including the global South in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and South America.

In a strong endorsement, Cohen further argues: “Comparative courses in how Al Jazeera, CNN, the BBC and U.S. networks portray the Iraq war and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict *should be taught in all U.S. high schools and colleges. Al Jazeera English should be widely available.*” The team at AJE itself takes special pride in its coverage of the Middle East. They state in the 2009 Information Package: “Again, the goal here is not to push a line or cater to a bias. The goal is far more revolutionary: we simply want people to understand the full story, not a narrow one.” AJE’s diversity in news coverage is good for open discussion and democracy but also for the promotion of peace and justice. Al Jazeera in fact practices what scholars have recently coined “peace journalism.” Academic studies by Dr. Mohammed El-Nawawy of Queens University of Charlotte and Shawn Powers of the Annenberg School for Communication & USC Center on Public Diplomacy show that Al Jazeera practices a form of conciliatory media or peace journalism: its stories and coverage have promoted cooperation, conflict resolution, and reconciliation [see <http://ajerp.com/results/>]

The diversity in AJE’s approach includes its focus on the civilian impact of wars and conflict. AJ is famous for its fearless, unembedded reporting. As one of AJE’s hosts, Mr. Rushing, notes: “CNN films the launch of the missile. Al Jazeera films what happens where it lands.”

Further, a high proportion of AJE’s reporters are women, also adding to the diversity in views and perspectives AJE presents.

In sum, AJE in Canada will greatly increase the quality and diversity of journalism in the country and the Campaign for Democratic Media believes it is imperative for Canadian media democracy that the CRTC approve Al Jazeera English’s application to broadcast in Canada.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

Anita Krajnc  
Member of the Steering Committee, Campaign For Democratic Media  
[anita.krajnc@gmail.com](mailto:anita.krajnc@gmail.com)  
(416) 825-6080

and

Steve Anderson  
National Coordinator, Campaign For Democratic Media  
(604) 837-5730  
[steve@democraticmedia.com](mailto:steve@democraticmedia.com)