



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

FAAE • NUMBER 002 • 2nd SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Tuesday, November 20, 2007

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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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•(1105)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): Good morning. This is meeting number 2 of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, Tuesday, November 20, 2007.

Today we meet to discuss the results of our steering committee work. The subcommittee on agenda and procedure met last week. You'll notice in the packet that's been given to you this morning that besides the motions that have been presented and the budget that will be looked at this morning, you have your report from the steering committee.

We want to first take a look at that; then we will have time for the remainder of the committee business. The only item that is on the agenda today is committee business. If everything works out as planned, next Thursday we'll begin with some legislation that's coming down the pike.

So take your report, the first report of the subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

On Thursday, November 15, we met and came up with some recommendations to this committee. All members of the steering committee were there. The committee decided that we could begin a study. In conjunction with conversations with the clerks and researchers, we felt that we could recommend that we proceed with the study of Bill C-9, An Act to implement the Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of Other States on Thursday, November 22, 2007, by inviting the Minister of Foreign Affairs and/or other senior departmental officials.

The rest of the report basically deals with a budget. We would want to adopt that budget, or at least make a recommendation to the committee to adopt a budget, and then move into our motions.

Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Let me congratulate you on being the chair again, and of course Mr. Wilfert and Madame Barbot on being vice-chairs of the new committee—I'm sure we'll all be working very well together—and of course the new members who have come, Raymond Chan and Paul and everybody else. We're looking forward to the session.

And of course, Gerry, it's very nice to see you, and Angela, it's nice to see you again.

Having done the nice things, let's get to business.

Concerning Bill C-9 and inviting the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Thursday, November 22, the minister is not in the country, so that's not possible. I say we just leave it as “senior departmental officials” who are available and continue with that.

As well, I think we would like to propose a list of a few witnesses for this, so that we can listen to the so-called expert witnesses. We have a list of these, which basically just means the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and others who are out there.

The Chair: There is a list that had been drawn up before. The steering committee felt that this meeting could be done very quickly; that there wouldn't be a long, extended.... I think we're all—

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: No, there's not a long list of witnesses.

The Chair: I know the Canadian Chamber of Commerce has asked to appear, and maybe a couple of other witnesses. After going through our steering committee, we saw in the paper this morning that the minister will be in Laos or somewhere, so he's not available. I think senior departmental officials would be sufficient.

Madame Barbot, and then Mr. Dewar.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ): Mr. Chairman, could we not go immediately to the motion about the presence of a Bloc Québécois member on the steering committee. As all of the parties agree with this motion, we could proceed immediately to consider it and be finished with it.

This is in regard to the motion that reads as follows: “That the Chair, the first Vice-Chair, a Member from the Bloc Québécois [...]”. This concerns the make-up of the steering committee.

•(1110)

[English]

The Chair: Right. You're suggesting that...? This is with regard to who sits on the steering committee from the Bloc Québécois?

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Precisely.

[English]

The Chair: We've already had our steering committee meeting. You're allowed one person on that committee, and you want to do a switch. Is that correct? Are you wanting to switch names on the steering committee?

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Precisely.

The motion is on page 2.

[English]

The Chair: Okay.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Everyone has already agreed to it, the whips have discussed it.

[English]

The Chair: I think that's something we can do. I don't know if we have to do that first off. We've already started on Bill C-9. May I suggest we just finish our discussion on Bill C-9 and then we go to the steering committee thing?

From what I understand here, that the chair, the vice-chair, a member from the Bloc Québécois, the parliamentary secretary do compose the subcommittee on agenda... You want a replacement on there, and I don't think there's any problem at all with that.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: I am afraid we will not have time to get to this, if we go through all the other documents.

[English]

The Chair: All right. Are we all agreed, then, to changing the name on the listing for the steering committee to include...?

Mr. Dewar.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): I wanted to establish the fact that I'm opposed, not because of the Bloc motion, but because of the McGrath committee, which in 1985 had recommended that we don't have parliamentary secretaries on steering committees. I know that had been the position of a previous party in opposition. I just wanted that on the record, and now you can go ahead and we'll pass your motion.

I wanted it to be noted, because it is something we actually have a problem with. The idea was that committees be independent, and having parliamentary secretaries on steering committees changes that. I don't know how the other parties feel, but in the recommendations of the McGrath committee back in 1985, it's one of the points that was underlined. I fully support that recommendation, so I don't support having parliamentary secretaries on steering committees. I support the Bloc, though.

The Chair: All right.

Some of those issues we just leave with the whips. I think some of them are about who gets to appoint who onto what committees. We take what you say, and that's fine. It's speaking to something different from the Bloc motion.

Does anyone else have a comment on the Bloc motion allowing them a different person on the steering committee?

(Motion agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

The Chair: Now back to Bill C-9.

Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: As I said, when the foreign minister's not in the country, we'll call the senior department officials to come and

talk about it. But we have a very short list here of individuals we would like to come to the committee. I have given it—

The Chair: I think that list was there prior to the summer break.

Mr. Dewar, did you want back on the list on this issue?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Yes, if I may. Sorry to impose myself again. It's just that on the list, I'm not seeing.... I heard the Chamber of Commerce. Was the Halifax Initiative invited? I think there was one other that we certainly had put forward. I don't have my notes from the last meeting.

We have some concerns about the bill and wanted to hear another perspective that would be brought forward by groups like the Halifax Initiative. It escapes me who the other group was.

The Chair: It's KAIROS.

Mr. Paul Dewar: KAIROS—thank you. Have they been invited?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mrs. Angela Crandall): No one's been invited. We haven't done that yet.

The Chair: Until it's cleared here, the invitations can't go out. That's why.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Great. I just want to make sure they're on the list, and that was it. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Yes, they're on the list.

Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Now with regard to the people being added to the list, is it of concern for the department to know who's opposed or why, or is there a discussion on the people who are brought before here, before they're actually brought, to see if there's a general conclusion and agreement that it will be a constructive appearance?

The Chair: We usually try to have some kind of a degree of balance. I think most parties are in agreement with this legislation. It doesn't mean that we have to find two that are in favour of it and two that are opposed, but I think we have to be showing that.... Well, first of all, all parties can submit witness lists. Regardless of the motion or the study, we submit lists. If all parties agree in principle, it may still be good for us just to be aware of some of the arguments.

If we're going to hear from one group that are in favour, that may not mean that we're going to hear from four that are opposed, so the clerk and the table will take that into account when you set up a list—

•(1115)

Mr. Peter Goldring: Yes, and that's the concern.

The Chair: For example, if we invite one group, and they're unable to attend, we may then go to get that same perspective or similar perspective from the next group on the list.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Or if they're—

The Chair: The Chamber of Commerce I think is one that wants to be there. The department is different. The department, if it's government legislation, will explain their perspective. Then we would find balance in the other witnesses called.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Or, if there are some who have been identified as having ongoing litigation, that just very well may not be giving us the information that we wish to hear. Or, on a positive note here, the Canadian Bar Association certainly would have an input into this and would be a valuable group to have appear.

The Chair: Okay, who else do we have on that? Anyone?

So we're okay on the idea of getting them called in on Thursday then?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: We had proposed another name. Did you receive it? All right.

[*English*]

The Chair: All right. So they'll get on that. Here we go—this is the part of starting up committees in the fall that is difficult. I met with someone this morning who was called on Friday to see if they could appear at a different committee this morning, and they were all frustrated that they weren't able to get their testimony translated because they just finished what they were going to say on Sunday night. So we have to get on these calls today.

Mr. Wilfert.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Can I just hear the list again as to specifically who will be invited? I know we had a list.

The Chair: One was circulated.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: But we're not agreeing to that list.

The Chair: It's in front of you.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Yes, but we're not inviting all these people.

Voices: No.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: So who have we agreed to so far? The chamber—

The Chair: The department, the chamber, perhaps someone from the Halifax Initiative or KAIROS. I don't know of anyone else. I would say those are the main ones. If all of a sudden the Canadian Chamber of Commerce can't appear, there may be another business group that would appear.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Yes, that's fine with us. I don't think we have to have a huge list to stay balanced.

The Chair: Unfortunately, at this point in time too, a lot of it may be dependent on who is close. If the Bloc has submitted a name from Montreal, then we'll have to get hold of them quickly so that they can make travel arrangements as well. There may be one or two others just to fill out the panel, but I don't think it's going to be a long, extended study.

We will see how long that lasts, and we would probably need an hour or so on clause-by-clause.... That might be Tuesday, then, just to have a heads-up on that.

Seeing how we're on Bill C-9 already, I guess the next thing on the agenda is the budget. Take a look at your budget here. This budget is in conjunction with the Bill C-9 study, and it gives us a budget to work with, allowing some translation, allowing some travel, allowing video conferencing if we need it, and the working meal for the day. So that's a budget of \$11,750.

The Clerk: Right. If we have witnesses coming from outside of Ottawa, that's the major bulk of the expense. Otherwise it would be about \$3,000.

The Chair: Following normal protocol—it seems like typical government protocol—we've asked for more money than what we need. We may not be having people from Victoria, Vancouver, but it's there in case we need it, and then it just goes back in.

Do I have a motion to accept the budget as proposed? Madam Barbot.

(Motion agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

• (1120)

The Chair: All right.

There have been a number of motions brought forward. Before we get to those motions, the steering committee became aware, through our clerk and through Gerry, of the seminar that is being held at the Château Laurier on December 10 to 11, I believe, entitled "Peacebuilding in Afghanistan: Taking Stock and Looking Ahead". This is sponsored by the University of Ottawa.

I think all parties could say that we were impressed with the witnesses who are coming to this seminar. Barnett Rubin will be there. There are a number of experts from around the world who will be at this.

There is a motion to look at Afghanistan. Again, even to travel off the Hill, we have to have certain arrangements set up.

There will be a former foreign minister of Afghanistan. There will be a lot of different groups mentioned, so we would want to take in that seminar on the regular committee day.

Gerry.

Mr. Gerald Schmitz (Committee Researcher): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In your packages, I think you also have quite a long list of possible future witnesses on Afghanistan, in addition to those already heard. There's further information on the conference as an appendix to that. You can see it's almost a page of participants, and many of them are among the world's leading analysts on Afghanistan.

We should take advantage of the fact that they will be in Ottawa. I wasn't here for the steering committee, but I think that's what led to the decision to take in as much as possible of that.

The partial list of participants in fact is also appended to a document that I see you have in your package on possible additional witnesses.

I might just point out a third thing. I know we haven't gotten to the motions yet, but I know there's certainly interest, as well, in hearing from Canadian NGOs that are working in Afghanistan. As indicated in this list, all of the Canadian NGOs working in Afghanistan have coordinated themselves into—and it's put down here—something called the Afghanistan Reference Group. They already made a presentation on October 27 to the independent Manley panel and so on. They're coming out with a series of studies and so on.

The NGOs themselves have come up and created this coordinated network. There are spokespersons for that.

The Chair: Who are the spokespersons, and how many groups are we talking about?

Mr. Gerald Schmitz: I met him at a conference. He's the coordinator and the facilitator for the reference group. There may be

The Chair: What is he—peace, operations? What does he do?

Mr. Gerald Schmitz: He's actually part of the Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee. The Afghanistan Reference Group is a mechanism to bring together all of the Canadian NGOs that are working on the ground in Afghanistan. As I say, they made a joint presentation to the Manley panel. They obviously would certainly be prepared to come and share their perspectives with the committee.

Given that we have time constraints, it might be one way of hearing a number of NGO views at one time.

The Chair: Can I intercede here for a second?

How many of you are serving on another committee as well? I wonder if Bernard is. Do you know? I don't think he is.

Are you, Paul?

• (1125)

Mr. Paul Dewar: It's for Bill C-6, the bills and voting.

The Chair: Is that a Tuesday morning committee meeting?

Mr. Paul Dewar: We haven't heard yet. We haven't had notice. It's the procedure and House affairs committee. They haven't given us a schedule on that one.

The Chair: If you notice in what is summarized in the report here, we're also asking that we meet that day from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. The reason is we think they may close down for lunch hour at the Château, so it would be fruitless going from 11 a.m. to 12 noon and just hearing one person. That may be our time, but the whole morning would really be open. I think the whole day is open to us, if we want to stay. I know with scheduling and that we can't tell them who we want to hear. It's available.

Anyway, we have suggested that, for certain, we'd be there from nine to eleven, and we would encourage you to stay as long as you can that day.

Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): We're tying up the whole conference, in other words.

The Chair: You will be there for the conference.

Hon. Keith Martin: As long as we're there, then we can pick and choose—

The Chair: Yes, but I'll tell you what, this is what our committee spoke about, that we may be signed up but we want to make certain we have good representation from the committee. They're announcing us, and I don't want to have two from one side and one from another, and there's our foreign affairs committee. That's our committee date. We're expected to be there, especially during those hours.

Are we all in favour of that? I think it was unanimous at the steering committee.

(Motion agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

The Chair: Done.

We also need a motion then for extensive travel for us to go off the Hill, and we'll all kind of hold hands and walk down to the Chateau Laurier.

A motion, first of all, from Mr. Dewar, seconded by Mr. Goldring.

It will be what someone used to call shank's pony—you're walking.

(Motion agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

The Chair: There is one more here.

This, again, was passed, I think unanimously, but it was definitely passed by your steering committee: that the committee meet with representatives from the Canadian Food Security Policy Group on December 4, 2007.

This deals with Canada's role. I think Canadian Foodgrains Bank is part of that. There are also some issues with Africa. So the committee recommended that we look at that on that date.

(Motion agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

The Chair: Could I have a motion to adopt the report?

Monsieur Lebel, seconded by Mr. Martin.

(Motion agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

The Chair: We'll now proceed into the next portion. As you know, when motions are brought forward, they can be brought out at any time. We're now bringing them out, in the order they were received, to the committee. All these motions are deemed to have stood the test of the 48-hour time.

First on the paper is a motion by Mr. Dewar:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (i) undertake an evaluation of Canada's mission in Afghanistan with particular focus on Canada's diplomatic and development capacity and (ii) examine opportunities by which Canada and the international community can effectively support the initiation of a renewed peace process at the local, regional and international levels, to provide a political solution for lasting peace in Afghanistan.

Mr. Dewar, would you like to speak to your motion?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Yes, Chair.

I just wanted to turn it over to amendment by Madame Barbot, who had, I think, brought forward to the clerk what we'll call a friendly amendment. This was simply because there were two motions, one by the New Democratic Party and one by the Bloc, and it was a matter of putting the two together. Maybe I'll turn it over to Madame Barbot in terms of her proposal and her friendly amendment.

The Chair: Madam Barbot, would you like to speak to Mr. Dewar's motion?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: In fact, what we are proposing completes and clarifies what Mr. Dewar was saying in his motion. We also incorporated Keith Martin's motion as far as CIDA is concerned.

Would you like me to read it? I don't know if everyone has read it as it is now worded.

• (1130)

[*English*]

The Chair: Can I just interrupt, to make certain the committee is aware of what would happen then? If this friendly amendment were accepted and passed, would your motion then be struck down as well as Mr. Martin's and Mr. Wilfert's, so that we would have one motion left?

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: There would be one motion.

The Chair: All right, continue, Madame Barbot.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: With this motion, we propose following up on the work that has already been done on Afghanistan and hearing testimony with the objective of writing a report afterwards. We want to report to the House of Commons on the mission in Afghanistan no later than December 14. That is on the second page.

[*English*]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: What is the motion?

The Chair: It is printed on the second page. This then becomes a friendly amendment to Mr. Dewar's motion. She wrote it out so we would be able to see it.

It doesn't change substantively what Mr. Dewar's motion did, although it does add timelines, and it does say that we can bring in the testimony from the summer, from last spring. It also says "making sure to assess, among other aspects, CIDA's participation in Afghanistan and also making sure to investigate possible approaches to establishing a lasting peace in Afghanistan, and, in order to make recommendations...".

In my opinion, it does not change the motion substantively enough to be ruled out of order, so I do believe that this motion is in order. Here you have the friendly amendment to Mr. Dewar's motion, and we would then see Mr. Wilfert's and Mr. Martin's motions struck.

Is that clearly represented, Mr. Martin?

Hon. Keith Martin: This is a very big issue that we all know, and I think all of us feel passionate about dealing with this.

Because of the substantive nature of the motion and the issue at hand, I would recommend that we push the timeline out, only because I don't think we'll be able to do justice to it, given the other issues we'll be dealing with prior to that time. We have only four weeks—six meetings—until the break.

The Chair: Not even, because some of them will be in —

Hon. Keith Martin: Right, so we have one taken off for the Chateau Laurier meeting, one taken out because of the Foodgrains Bank. At maximum, we would have four meetings in total.

I think that this is just such a substantive issue and because all of the parties here—the Bloc, the NDP, and the Liberal Party—have put forth essentially the same motion to do the same thing, there's a lot of cross-party interest and also public interest in this issue that can provide substantive direction to the government on how to ensure that our mission in Afghanistan is going to be improved.

I would just recommend, Madame Barbot, if you have agreement with Mr. Dewar, that we push this timeline out. I know we want to get an effective series of solutions, and quickly, but maybe we need to push this out to the end of February.

The Chair: Madame Barbot. No?

Mr. Goldring, did you want to speak on that?

Mr. Peter Goldring: In addition to the timeline, which I think would be very tight to do, given the many other issues we have here to meet with and discuss, it's my belief that in Afghanistan, Canada is doing its best to examine the issues that are happening there. It has brought in a completely independent committee to do that examination too. It would be premature, I believe, to have the government respond before the secondary committee is brought in too. We have the report from the secondary committee. In addition, I believe this is coming before Parliament too.

You correctly identified the tightness of the agenda going in from here. I believe this really doesn't materially change it from what we had the discussions on before. In light of that, I believe that it precludes what results and what reporting may be coming from this independent committee. It would be better to hold this and proceed with the other orders of business that we have, so we don't cut those short.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Goldring.

There is just one other point on that before Madame Barbot speaks. Of course passing the motion with the current date on there would probably mean that we would never be able to ask the Manley commission to come forward and explain their report. We could after the fact, but not in conjunction with this report.

Madame Barbot.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Precisely, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Goldring spoke about the fact that an independent commission is going to study the issue. We feel that parliamentarians are primarily responsible for giving an opinion to the government. In that regard, we feel it is important, given that we have already worked on the Afghanistan file, that this work at least be the subject of a preliminary report. That is what I said to Mr. Martin. This preliminary report would not prevent us from continuing to study the Afghanistan issue. In any case, we feel that for the moment, it is important to let it be known that the committee has done work on this, and to communicate the results.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Wilfert.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Chairman, one way we could get around this is to use the 14th for an interim report. That way we would keep to the timeline but we would have an interim report available. The Manley commission is reporting sometime at the end of January. One of the issues I raised at the steering committee is that if we are going to have other items on this agenda that would take time away, it's not as doable as we may all like. It may be that if we concentrate and do an interim report for the 14th, at least we'll have something to deal with. I'm not in favour of dropping the 14th. It might be more doable though as an interim. At least we'll have something out there that we're aiming for.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wilfert.

Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin: I understand what Mr. Goldring is saying, but we know that this is the pre-eminent foreign policy challenge for your government and also for our country right now. It's clearly our duty as the foreign affairs committee to be able to deal with this.

This isn't going to be in lieu of the report done by Mr. Manley and company, but it would be a wonderful addition to it. We all know this wouldn't be the first time that various groups within Parliament are actually dealing with the same thing at the same time. If we have the interim report, as Mr. Wilfert suggested, which I think is a good idea, in the middle of December, but continue, we'll be able to look at the report by Mr. Manley when we come back and hear other groups that are important.

We also know that there's no way on God's green earth that we can actually do justice to this issue even by the end of February. However, by the end of February we can incorporate the work of Mr. Manley and his team. We can also provide some other groups to listen to in February, and we can really come out with a substantive series of solutions that will deal with the ever-changing nature, not only within Afghanistan, but also particularly within Pakistan, which is having huge implications within the country. That's not being dealt with, nor are the other regional implications outside of the country.

We can really do justice to this by looking at those players outside of Afghanistan that are having a huge play within the country and mitigating what's going on there.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Martin.

Mr. Dewar and then Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I'm going to echo some of the comments made.

The understanding at committee, I believe—correct me if I'm wrong on this, Chair—was that we were talking about having a preliminary report. So it was just an omission in the text. That's a common sense thing to do.

I'd like to add that if we are able to have that interim report, what we're doing is actually adding to and contributing towards this special panel, which I think Canadians want to see. I have to be clear on our party's stand on this. We believe Parliament should be handling this issue. The government has gone ahead and it has decided to do an extra-parliamentary panel. That's fine. That's their choice and they've done it.

Our role and our responsibility and what we're paid to do is to examine issues of significance in foreign affairs. As was mentioned by Mr. Martin, this is it, the issue of Afghanistan.

Having that change, preliminary report or interim report—choose your word—will meet that mark. It will contribute towards what the panel is doing, and I think that's our role. Hopefully there will be some reciprocity in that process. In other words, if we're able, at some date, to incorporate what they've said and what we've heard from them, all the better. I think it's really important that we do have the interim report in December to contribute towards the panel. I think that can be changed by just changing the one word in the motion.

• (1140)

The Chair: All right. Thank you, Mr. Dewar.

Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Listening to all these things, we have a problem—I think it's been outlined—which is the December 14 date, even for a preliminary report. You know, Mr. Chair, when the reports are made, whether they're preliminary or not, we have very diverse opinions among the parties, so you could have a situation of one not agreeing with the other, and there could be minority report issues, and all these things. It does become a bigger and bigger picture.

At the same time, although there is a government panel out there—the Manley panel is doing this thing that we all want to listen to—we still have other issues, as Gerry pointed out, about the NGOs coming and talking in front of us, about the conference that we're going to attend, and all these things.

I'm not saying that the report is not needed, and parliamentarians don't have the ability and the right to carry on, but if you want to make this thing.... This is cutting it short. This is like running just to meet an artificial deadline without doing proper work. There is the issue of Pakistan, as well as all the other issues, so I agree we need to do a comprehensive report. Technically, I think looking for a preliminary report is running without doing a proper job, so it will be very difficult for us to support.

I'm not talking only about the Manley panel; I'm also talking about others. And, most importantly, it is important that we bring in the NGOs, who have now come out with a collective voice, and listen and do proper justice to the report, if you want to. Ultimately, it's an important issue that the foreign affairs committee will examine. The foreign affairs committee's credibility will come into question, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Obhrai, for those points.

I think the last thing that any of us would want to see is a report that isn't clearly reflective of what we've seen, a report that's filed because of an artificial deadline and that really has no substance to it. So, for that, I applaud those for allowing us the opportunity to include all the testimony that has been heard prior to the summer break.

That does create some difficulties, perhaps, for some of the new members. We have a number of new members on the committee who are then asked to sign on to a lot of witnesses on different sides of the report. Those will be reflected in this report. So if you're including that much, we're in a very tight timeline.

I understand what you're saying. In some measure, it's accountability that we're asking for with that date. We don't just want to study forever and never bring in a report, but I'll tell you, it would have to be a balanced report. I'm one who thinks that the more we can work together... We can have three pages of a preliminary report from the committee. We can have eight pages from this group, six pages from the next party, five pages from over here, and it's a shemuzzle. Is it workable? I guess that's what we're here to find out.

Is there anyone else?

Madame Barbot, and then Mr. Goldring.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: In answer to your question, I think it is entirely doable, given the work that has already been accomplished. We could meet the deadline with no difficulty. We must not forget that we have an entire session of work behind us, and that even for us, it would be good to continue. It would be very useful to take stock of the situation, to see where we are at and to determine the direction we should take in future business.

Pursuant to what has been said, I will table an amendment that adds the following words to the end of the motion:

[...] to table a preliminary report in the House of Commons no later than December 14, 2007.

I think the date is quite appropriate, given that the bulk of the work has already been done.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Looking at the timeline here, I think it's important to look at this peacebuilding in Afghanistan on December 11. While I can certainly understand why we would want to put forward a report, to suggest that we could wrap this issue up into a report that has full meaning to it, when we're still discussing with the NGOs on December 11—and do this by December 14—is being a little bit over-optimistic. I would suggest that this time of December 14 for wrapping up the report is just too problematic. How can we have a meaningful report by that date, with the consultations that we have from now until then? And then considering that we will not have had the benefit of talking to or interviewing or having committee meetings with the independent panel that is looking after it, I would suggest that December 14 is very problematic.

• (1145)

The Chair: Again, I would remind you that this is a preliminary report. It's not a conclusive report. It's not the final report. We may still have more witnesses after Christmas. The study may continue. This would be a bit of a picture as to what we have received. It may not include any of the testimony we hear on the 11th. It would in that we have Rubin coming—well, we've already heard him. Some of those people would be reflected in the report, but it doesn't mean that we have to have a report in which the witnesses on the 12th or 11th have to be in it.

Mr. Peter Goldring: I would say that it's precluding having a meaningful report by trying to push a date that is so close to some meetings with the groups—the NGOs. I really don't see how we can support this position. How meaningful can that report be in light of the other things that we have to do? How much more meaningful will the report be if we're able to proceed through in discussing with the other parties who are doing a more in-depth study on it?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Chan, Mr. Martin, Mr. Obhrai.

Hon. Raymond Chan (Richmond, Lib.): I would think that the interim report is very important in order to summarize all the work that this committee has done, in the last session as well, as a contribution to the members of the panel. I don't know if there's any other process that is in the plan for this committee to contribute to the panel. This interim report would be a perfect way to make sure that the panel is taking into consideration inputs from the public. This committee is formed by elected officials representing the people of Canada. If our voice is not being heard by the panel, I think that would defeat the purpose of that panel. That's why I think this interim report is a very important contribution to the whole debate in the country.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chan.

Mr. Martin and then Mr. Obhrai.

Sorry, Madame St-Hilaire, we missed you. I thought you were just waving at me earlier. Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): We've seen this in the past, it is aggressive life support. With all due respect, Mr. Chairman, I think that most of the people and most colleagues have said what they have to say.

Contrary to what my colleagues on the government side say, I believe that the addition of the words “preliminary report” is important. We agree on the fact that there is a very important issue, and it is definitely Afghanistan. I am new on the committee, and I am determined to analyze everything that has been said on the subject in the past. If we review the situation by December 14, we will demonstrate that we are on top of current events. Again, I would point out that we are talking about a preliminary report.

Given these factors, I think we should put the question, Mr. Chairman.

[*English*]

The Chair: Merci.

I did have two others on with Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin: No, that's fine.

The Chair: Mr. Obhrai, you were on as well.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I just want to reiterate that we believe this report would not be an actual reflection of proper work done by the committee. I do understand that we all worked hard, but it's difficult for the government to support this.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Obhrai.

We'll now have the question on the motion by Mr. Dewar, as amended by Madame Barbot and Mr. Wilfert..

•(1150)

Hon. Keith Martin: Could you read the motion?

The Chair: I will read the motion. Except for the preliminary report, it is printed in the handout.

Hon. Keith Martin: So you're going by what Madam Barbot has?

The Chair: Except for the second amendment, which includes that the committee table a preliminary report to the House of Commons by December 14, 2007.

Hon. Keith Martin: But that this study continue.

The Chair: Well, yes, it's preliminary.

Mr. Gerald Schmitz: You can put it in the preliminary report of the study.

Hon. Keith Martin: I just want to make sure that this is going to continue into February, that's all, and that this study—

The Chair: This study is ongoing.

(Motion as amended agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

The Chair: We will now proceed to the second motion that has been received. This motion is from Mr. Dewar and reads:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, as part of its ongoing concern for the crisis in Darfur and consideration of issues of corporate social responsibility, invite senior officials from DFAIT, CIDA, and other relevant departments, as well as the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide, to appear before the committee to share knowledge about what Canadian public and private funds are currently invested in Sudan, and explore legislative initiatives the Canadian government could put forward to set regulations for such investments, and report to the House on its findings.

Mr. Dewar, would you like to speak to your motion, please?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Yes, I would, Chair, and I won't take long.

This is actually a bring-forward from the previous committee's business and work.

Chair, I think it's well known that the humanitarian crisis in Darfur has been called by many a genocide in slow motion. We need to be able to look at different ways to positively affect and change what's going on in Darfur. This is simply a way we can look at it.

Many have suggested that the investment, the money and the profits that are being made in Sudan, in general is feeding proxy parties like the Janjaweed. In other words, the profits that are made by the Government of Sudan are being channelled to those who are taking part in this humanitarian crisis.

My point is simply that this is a way that has been suggested not just by civil society and others, but was put on the agenda of the foreign affairs committee last time we met. And we were hoping to actually have met during the summer, if possible. This is the next opportunity to look at it.

Finally, Mr. Chair, I would simply give to you the fact that looking at divestment has been done in other jurisdictions. In fact, we now have institutions within Canada and we have the State of California that have done this. I think it's cogent, it's relevant, and I hope for the support of the committee on this.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dewar.

Madame Barbot.

The Clerk: No, that was from the last time.

The Chair: Mr. Obhrai, and then Mr. Martin.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We do understand the concern the member has put forward, and we do recognize the severity of the situation taking place in Darfur. Canada is the fourth-largest contributor of humanitarian aid to that region. We are right at the forefront of the Darfur issue.

I just came back from the United Nations, where, under the auspices of the Secretary General, we talked of the current situation in Darfur and the UN hybrid force that is now recommended. Canada is very strongly at the table. We were down in Tripoli at the peace conference. Unfortunately, certain of the rebels did not show up, so the push is still going on, but at this time the major issue still remains for the hybrid force to go into Darfur, which Canada very fully supports.

Having said that, the difficulty we are having with this motion is that the Department of Foreign Affairs and CIDA have nothing to do with investment or divestment. This is something that is with the Department of Finance or the Treasury Board.

Therefore, I would recommend to my honourable colleague that he get his other colleagues in the finance committee or any other committee to bring the relevant officials. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has nothing to do with this issue of divestment. Maybe you would want to try the finance committee to carry on with this motion. You could get the officials from the finance department or officials from Treasury Board to come and answer those questions you have just asked in this motion.

•(1155)

The Chair: So you're saying here that the questions that are posed in the motion are not those to be answered by the departments that this committee—

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: That's right. The Department of Foreign Affairs and CIDA are unable to talk about the investment and all these things. This falls under the jurisdiction of the Department of Finance or Treasury Board, and it would be appropriate to discuss this issue in those committees.

The Chair: All right. Thank you, Mr. Obhrai.

We'll go to Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin: I understand Mr. Dewar's initiative, and I think it's good. I think it does belong here, because we've got the Special Economic Measures Act that DFAIT and CIDA both have responsibilities for with finance, as Mr. Obhrai said, but I think it should be expanded to involve Sudan, because the comprehensive peace agreement is collapsing. What's going to happen in the south is going to make Darfur look like a little backyard brawl, and the situation is becoming worse very quickly. So the crisis is going to expand and become much worse than what we've seen. So what I could recommend, as a friendly amendment to Mr. Dewar, is that we change the word "Darfur" to "Sudan", and then after the words "committee to share knowledge"... I'll word it in a friendly amendment: "...pursuant to Standing Order...as part of its ongoing concern for the crisis in Darfur—"

The Chair: You mean Sudan, right?

Hon. Keith Martin: Sorry. Yes, thank you—"in Sudan..." the committee "invite senior officials from DFAIT, CIDA, and other relevant departments, as well as the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide, to appear before the committee to share knowledge about what Canadian initiatives should be championed to stop the genocide that is occurring and identify what Canadian public and private funds are currently invested in Sudan," etc.

So it really involves two things. It not only involves the issue of investment, but it also involves the issue of looking at not only Darfur but the country as a whole, because a large part of the oil exploration and extraction is taking place in southern Sudan, and there are problems in the east too, which are also blowing up. It also enables us to provide solutions outside of that to be able to prevent this.

This situation is going to get so bad so quickly that I think it is our responsibility. We'd be remiss if we did not expand this to include the country and not only offer to deal with the issues of divestment but also offer other critical acute solutions that Canada can and should champion to prevent the mass slaughter that is going to happen on the horizon.

The Chair: Can I ask you, Mr. Martin, to write out your motion as amended and talk to Mr. Dewar about it, or at least present it? You don't have to give it to Mr. Dewar, but if you would read it into the...

Point of order.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Point of order. I was just wondering about one of the comments made, which I raised as an issue. Can this committee call officials from other departments to come here?

The Chair: No. Bill C-9 is foreign affairs. We can call those from the foreign affairs department but not from any other department.

The Clerk: But it's standard to invite—

The Chair: Yes, you can invite whoever.

So we could conceivably... You know, Mr. Dewar's motion is in order in that respect, because it says "and relevant departments", doesn't it? So it may not include DFAIT. We'd have to sit down and talk about whether or not we would want him on other issues not specific to—

Mr. Paul Dewar: Point of order, Mr. Chair. I think it's important to note that recently the government—in fact it was the foreign

affairs minister—announced economic sanctions against Burma, or Myanmar. I was going to speak to this later, but I think it's important to bring it up now. This is where it should be. In fact, the government confirms that through the Minister of Foreign Affairs, if I may, who just recently announced economic sanctions against Myanmar.

• (1200)

The Chair: That's not so much a point of order. That's more a point of debate.

We'll continue with Madame Barbot.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: In the motion, as it is worded, we are talking about the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide. We are not entirely sure what that is about. It would be difficult to get them to participate. Moreover, these people are not experts in the area. A group inquired about that. I therefore move that we take out the words "as well as the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide".

Moreover, I would like to add "NGOs and experts in civil society" after the words "[...] senior officials from DFAIT [...]". That would allow us to have a broader vision of this issue. Also, I think there is a problem in the French version. It says "[...] à venir lui rendre compte des fonds publics [...]" whereas it should say "[...] à venir faire état des fonds publics [...]".

[*English*]

The Chair: The problem is that you're speaking to Mr. Dewar's motion, and I understand that Mr. Martin is preparing his friendly amendment, which is going to.... I mean, there are some pretty major changes here.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: We can review that and wait for the changes. I could begin again at that point.

[*English*]

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Dewar.

Mr. Paul Dewar: To me they're both friendly amendments, and I have no problem with them.

The Chair: How close are you there, Keith?

Hon. Keith Martin: In my finest, non-doctor handwriting? This is a slow, hieroglyphic—

The Chair: Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring: The motion is about private funds that are currently invested and set regulations for investments. I'd like to know why that would be better heard in front of this committee than in front of finance or treasury. If that's the main thrust of the motion, I would think those are clearly under the purview of finance and treasury.

The Chair: We'll have to see how it all works out. The difficulty is that we have two very distinct... We're talking about a major study here. Madame Barbot has asked for all the NGOs, the civil society groups. We've talked about CIDA, DFAIT, finance, and about all-party parliamentary groups coming to speak about their knowledge. It's not just specific to investment. That's the problem. The motion says that they are to speak about their knowledge of Canadian public and private funds or investment in Sudan and then go from there.

We've asked for straight investment types of things. I don't know if that's really what we want.

Mr. Martin has stated how this whole thing is changing from not just Darfur but throughout all of Sudan. His comment was that it's going to make Darfur look like a backyard brawl. That is more than just Canada's role in investment. You better take a look at what this motion is saying, because if it changes from the investment to a whole study on Sudan, I'll rule it out of order.

A friendly amendment is not an amendment that becomes friendly to the person who gave it. It doesn't change or increase in a substantive measure the scope of what the motion is talking about. That would not mean that you could not resubmit a motion immediately. We would deal with it at the next meeting. But it has to work within what you're speaking about here.

We're going to go to Mr. Wilfert and Mr. Obhrai.

• (1205)

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Chairman, this is probably a monumental task that nobody can answer, but we're starting to raise expectations in different motions here that say we'd like to see certain studies done. I don't know whether the researcher can tell us whether there is a ballpark timeline we can develop—obviously, “ballpark” meaning we're not going to have to stick to it—to give us at least some indication, once we work out what witnesses to hear, of what realistically we could expect. We only have so many committee meetings. I don't want to start raising expectations, which has happened before, whereby people expect that the something else we have put on the agenda is going to show up.

I certainly support Mr. Dewar's intent, but the question becomes what is doable, if we are going to be faced with a major Afghanistan study and are going to do a study on something else. Some of these motions may only take one committee meeting, and that's fine. But for some of the others I would like to get a more realistic understanding of what it is we're being asked to do, so that when people contact us... I think our experience in the last committee, with regard to both democratic development and the attempt to deal with the China report from the subcommittee on human rights, was a classic example of trying to mix too many things at the same time.

The Chair: That's why I asked the committee to take a very close look at what you're changing here. This motion of Mr. Dewar's is achievable, I think, the way it's written; dealing with finances and public investment is one thing. But when we're talking about a major study and are now going to include all the NGOs, include all the civil society groups, include the parliamentary groups, when do we want to do it?

There's another motion coming up on Burma. The timelines on Burma... The event is happening now. We've been remarkably good

at doing studies after the fact, in so many cases. Burma is rather important, Afghanistan is very important, and Sudan is, unquestionably. All of these are very important works. But when we broaden this thing out to the extent that I fear that this amendment may do, all of a sudden it becomes a full-course meal, a full-course study. I accept what your concern is.

We have Mr. Obhrai, then Mr. Dewar and Madame Barbot.

An hon. member: I had my hand up before her.

The Chair: Well, you're on the list.

Go ahead.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I don't mind; she can go ahead. Let's have ladies first; go ahead.

The Chair: Madame Barbot.

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Thank you for the “ladies first”.

[*Translation*]

I do not see what would prevent us from doing the study that we discussed. Two changes would be made. Rather than talking about Darfur, we will talk about Sudan, which makes sense in that we will be covering a greater area. Furthermore, we asked to remove the words “All-Party Parliamentary Group” because these people are not experts in the matter. Insofar as the addition of the words “NGOs and civil society organizations”, it in no way implies that everyone will appear.

As usual, a certain number of witnesses will report, according to their level of expertise, on the situation, which has not changed. It is an issue of studying the public and private Canadian investments made in Sudan, and to think about legislation. If it is true in the case of Darfur, I do not see why it would not also be the case in Sudan. These measures are all subject to the Special Economic Measures Act, which in turn comes under the Department of Foreign Affairs. I do not see why we are being told that this issue should be studied elsewhere: it absolutely is our responsibility. As far as we are concerned, it certainly is in Foreign Affairs' area of jurisdiction.

• (1210)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Barbot.

There was a case—this is just for your information—in the last Parliament in which a committee called people, and the witnesses came and were not relevant to the specifics of the study. The chair—and I think it was deemed rightfully so—then said you have to be relevant to the topic of study.

What we would be bringing in, then, are people specific to divestment.

An hon. member: [*Inaudible*].

The Chair: All right, you do that, but we'll do it in a balanced way, and that will determine the length of this study.

Madame Barbot has had her time. Next is Mr. Obhrai, Mr. Martin, and then Mr. Chan.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The government has very serious difficulty with the issue of making a study on public and private investment. If you're talking about private funds, you're talking about public pension funds, which foreign affairs has nothing to do with. It's not relevant.

Doing an economic measure, as was adopted with Burma.... That is not a study dealing with what private funds are doing, all those things. It's just an economic statement. We're not asking for economic sanctions against Sudan at this time here.

But to do a study with relevance to private funds, to pension funds, to all these things, that is not the purview of the foreign affairs committee; that's the purview of the finance committee. We're mixing two things together.

I don't have any problem if you want to do a study on Sudan dealing with other issues, like the comprehensive peace agreement and all these things. However, the difficulty is we are moving into an area that the Department of Foreign Affairs just doesn't deal with: private funds, pension funds, and all these things. It's nothing to do with economic sanctions; therefore, it is not under the purview.

Now, I'm asking you as the chair whether this is relevant. We feel it's not relevant to this committee. Unless there's a change in the wording, we would have difficulty doing that. I'm asking you, why are we studying private funds and these things in this committee? It should be done, appropriately, by the finance committee.

So I'm asking you to make a ruling on this.

The Chair: Maybe I need to speak a little more closely with the clerk on this, but I think the motion would be in order the way that I view it at present. We already have undertaken a study on mining and social responsibility, corporate responsibility. That has already taken place in the subcommittee. That was already deemed appropriate for our subcommittee, which is an arm of this committee.

Although I agree with your assessment: there is crossover. We would be hearing much more from other departments than we would from our own department, but I think that part of it...

You may well be right. It may be better handled in a finance or revenue committee, but still, we have the precedent of studying social and corporate responsibility through the mining sector.

All right. Mr. Dewar had a quick one, and then Mr. Martin and Mr. Chan.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Thank you, Chair.

In response I would just suggest that the government's recent actions in this area—to go back to Burma—obviously suggest that what we're doing here is congruent with what they've announced on Burma. I say that because they're talking about no new private investment as well as government investment.

A final point is that if we look at what we're doing here, this is to do a study to report to Parliament. For reasons that are very clear to all of us, we need to find out more about this issue. It hasn't been

brought up in the Canadian Parliament; it has been brought up in other jurisdictions that have acted.

I might add that it's been brought up with other Canadian institutions, and they've acted. SEMA, which was brought in by a Conservative government in 1992, was put in place to do this kind of thing through the foreign affairs department.

I just wanted to lay those points down for the record.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dewar.

Mr. Martin and Mr. Chan.

• (1215)

Hon. Keith Martin: We would be remiss if we didn't deal with the first genocide of the 21st century, which continues unabated and is going to get worse, as I said before.

Is there a role for government—Mr. Obhrai says there's not—in both public and private investment? One only has to look at South Africa and the divestment that occurred as part of a government-mandated initiative under Mr. Mulroney to know that it is happening.

Furthermore, we also have a legislative tool that is largely directed by the Department of Foreign Affairs, and that's the Special Economic Measures Act. This is well within the purview of the government and also well within the purview of this committee.

So I've done the motion, Mr. Chair. Would you like me to read it?

The Chair: Not quite yet.

This is so we can better understand exactly how the committee views a motion like this. We've now had a major study on Afghanistan, and the interim report will be given on December 14. That report will be ongoing. We've said that.

How big a study are we looking at here? The table says that this could be done in maybe two meetings at which we have the department. Just so we get a general idea, we're not talking about a major study like Afghanistan. We're just wanting the specifics. That sounds positive.

Mr. Martin, before you go to your motion, and I'll allow you to do that, I think Mr. Chan wanted in on the debate, so we'll give him the chance.

Hon. Raymond Chan: My support for having this committee study this issue is because of the political and social impact on Sudan and Darfur. This is why I would find it incredible if you didn't listen to the NGOs on the political and social impact of any private or government investments in that region. This is why we must hear the NGOs.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chan.

Are we ready for the amendment to Mr. Dewar's motion?

Hon. Keith Martin: Would you like me to read the amended motion?

The Chair: Yes, just read the proposed amendment to the motion. Do you have it as the motion would read?

Hon. Keith Martin: I incorporated everything, including some things the Bloc wanted. I'm trying to square everybody's interests here. We could even give this to the Subcommittee on International Human Rights as a recommendation if we wanted to. That's a possibility. They're the masters of their destiny. We could give it as a recommendation from the main committee, which would be a valuable thing for them to look at. Here's the motion:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, as part of its ongoing concern for the crisis in Sudan, invite senior officials from DFAIT, CIDA, other relevant departments, and experts in civil society, as well as the All-Party Group for the Prevention of Genocide to appear before the committee to share their knowledge about what Canadian initiatives Canada should champion to stop the genocide; examine what public and private funds are currently invested in Sudan; explore legislative initiatives the Canadian government could put forward to set regulations for such investments; and report to the House on its findings.

The Chair: The problem here is that it's not what the Bloc said. The Bloc asked for the all-party parliamentary group to be taken out of the motion.

Hon. Keith Martin: We can remove it.

The Chair: You would remove that then?

Hon. Keith Martin: Yes.

The Chair: All right, remove it. Can you then pass that up?

We'll go to Mr. Obhrai.

• (1220)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: For the record, the government feels that this motion could best be handled by another committee, not by foreign affairs. This would be the government's view.

I just want to say, though, that Mr. Chan's point on the impact this thing would have was very well taken. And the NGOs should look at it from the social point of view, as well. I think that's a very strong point. We are just coming out and saying which recommendations, without listening to the NGOs. We are leaving one very strong segment of a development issue totally out of it.

The Chair: The NGOs are included.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Oh, they are.

But we feel that another committee can handle this better and would have better resources than the foreign affairs committee.

Thank you.

The Chair: All right, is there any other debate on the amended motion?

Do you want to hear it one more time?

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Could you reread the motion?

[English]

The Chair: There is no way I can read that motion. Mr. Martin, would you read that, very slowly and carefully?

[Translation]

Hon. Keith Martin: I will read it more slowly.

[English]

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, as part of its ongoing concern for the

crisis in Sudan, invite senior officials from DFAIT, CIDA, other relevant departments, and experts in civil society to appear before the committee to share their knowledge about what Canadian initiatives Canada should champion to stop the genocide; examine what public and private funds are currently invested in Sudan; explore legislative initiatives that Canadian government could put forward to set regulations for such investments; and report to the House on its findings.

The Chair: Madame Barbot.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: In order to avoid any misunderstandings regarding the term, I think it would be better if, instead of using the words "stop the genocide", we said "crimes against humanity".

[English]

The Chair: I know the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide was mentioned. Did you mention it again later on?

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: Further on, he said "to stop the genocide". I would rather we said "to stop crimes against humanity", because the precise term is the focus of quite a debate. By saying "the crimes against humanity", that gives the same effect. We do not agree on that. If we want the motion...

[English]

The Chair: Obviously in the first motion the genocide was not mentioned.

Read out the last part of that motion, from after you've taken out the "All-Party Parliamentary Group" and you've invited experts to appear.

Hon. Keith Martin: ...to appear before the committee to share their knowledge about what Canadian initiatives Canada should champion to stop the genocide; examine what public and private funds are currently invested in Sudan; explore legislative initiatives the Canadian government could put forward to set regulations for such investments; and report to the House on its findings.

The Chair: Madame Barbot.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: I agree entirely that if we talk about genocide, it is much stronger. However, the international community does not agree on the word "genocide". Given that this discussion is ongoing, in order for my proposal to be clear and understood by everyone, under the circumstances, it has the same effect if we use the expression "crimes against humanity".

• (1225)

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Obhrai, then Mr. Martin.

If you guys can work it out where you're satisfied, and if not—

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: I have a question, before you go there on that line, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: One has to look at the bigger picture when we say “Stop the genocide” or “Stop crimes against humanity”. On one aspect, this motion is talking about a study on a financial issue of the investment and everything, in relation. So when we are going to use a broader word of “genocide” or “crimes against humanity”, then, legally, using that term, where does it take us? Does it take us into the warfare, into the peacekeeping forces, into all this kind of stuff?

I think what we're doing here, Mr. Chair, is we are moving into an area of territory over which we don't have a legal.... I think we are overstepping into two areas with those words “genocide” or “crimes against humanity”.

Did you hear what I said?

The Chair: I heard every word, and I am trying to determine whether or not, in two meetings... There are some big determining factors, and Madame Barbot is right. To have that kind of wording.... Madame Barbot is correct in her assumption. How can, as Mr. Obhrai stated, a study of Canadians' financial investments then be...?

All right. There may be another way of working this.

I think that's a very good point, Madame Barbot. I think I might have had to rule that out of order, because we are mixing apples and oranges here. It may be that the wording that is used here may very well be right, but our study is specific to Canadian investment and having the Department of Finance come, and then we're going to be....

Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin: There may be a way to square this, Mr. Chair, and to stop the genocide and crimes against humanity, so we can put both down. It appeals to those of us.... China and—

The Chair: Then you have a bigger study than what the original motion means. I think what Mr. Dewar has done—

Again, Paul, listen to me. What you have done is to word a motion that I think was thought out. It's not broadened. The scope in your motion here is manageable. But I think when you start now trying to satisfy Madame Barbot by saying no longer is it a genocide, because a genocide.... I mean, it's an addition to it.

Maybe you want a big study, but this motion did not ask for a massive study on Sudan—it asked for Darfur. And it did not make specific reference to genocide; now it does. Crimes against humanity was not mentioned; now it is. That's changing this motion. I think that unless we can come up with something that satisfies that particular aspect of it, we'll have to come up with another motion on another day.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Chair, I don't want to lose this motion at this point. I think if Mr. Martin would be willing to simply drop the genocide.... The crisis is what we initially had in the motion. I think it's interpretive. If we can drop “genocide, crimes against humanity” and go back to what was the intent of the motion, we'll get on with it. I accept his concerns. I agree with them. But in terms of this study for this committee, I propose we drop that language.

The Chair: Thank you.

Hon. Keith Martin: Thank you for that.

The Chair: Before we vote, we're going to have you read that again.

Mr. Goldring, then Madame Barbot again.

Mr. Peter Goldring: That was my concern too, a very clear corporate social responsibility. The only suggestion of the genocide was in the mere mention of the group, and that certainly didn't imply that's what the discussion would be; the discussion would be the corporate social responsibility. But now, to add in the “genocide” or “crimes against humanity” I think is going against what the original purpose of this was: to study the corporate social responsibility.

● (1230)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Goldring.

Madame Barbot, is that all right?

Are we ready for the question?

Mr. Martin, read the amended motion.

Hon. Keith Martin: That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, as part of its ongoing concern for the crisis in Sudan, invite senior officials from DFAIT, CIDA, other relevant departments, and experts in civil society to appear before the committee to share their knowledge about what Canadian initiatives Canada should champion to stop the crisis; examine what public and private funds are currently invested in Sudan; explore legislative initiatives the Canadian government could put forward to set regulations for such investments; and report to the House on its findings.

The Chair: I think that's better, and I think we may have some duplication in the “explore legislative initiatives”. I think you've already stated that earlier in your motion, basically, what initiatives we should take. Have you not?

Hon. Keith Martin: What Canadian issues Canada should champion to stop the crisis.... There are two initiatives: one to stop the crisis and the other one to look at the public and private funding investments and what initiatives can be done to affect that.

The Chair: There's still a problem here. The problem is this. Read those two again. You have said “what we can do to stop the crisis”. That's the problem I have had with that motion all along. What this motion has said is specific to the investments. Here it says “could put forward to set regulations for such investments”. That is the problem with it, Mr. Martin. The first recommendation you have listed there would have to be taken out.

Hon. Keith Martin: How about this: “what Canadian issues Canada should champion to stop the crisis, including examining what public and private funds are currently invested in Sudan, and explore ways we could put forward and set regulations for such investments and report in the House on its findings”.

The Chair: It's still mixing it. You're saying how is Canada going to stop the crisis? We're having people here on finance. That's what this motion is about. It's about investments. I can agree, but that might be another study. But in order to keep this motion in the integrity in which it was presented, the first part of that motion would have to be taken out.

Mr. Dewar, are you in agreement with that?

Here's the problem politically. We all know there's a crisis, but the problem I have with this motion isn't the political problem. What I have with this motion is keeping it specific to the public funding and investments. That's what Mr. Dewar's motion did. So I would say, Mr. Martin, that you would have to take that crisis part out, how Canada is going to solve the crisis in Sudan. If you want to put in "recognizing the crisis", or whatever, "how are our investments going to effect change?", you're asking the finance department to come and say how we can solve a crisis in Sudan.

Hon. Keith Martin: We are looking at other groups too. Other departments are included.

The Chair: That's fine. We can look at it, but you have to wordsmith the first part.

Hon. Keith Martin: We're dealing with....

The Chair: Mr. Dewar, do you understand what I'm suggesting?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Chair, the way the motion was originally written, which was actually the motion that was put before this committee and passed, I might add, was to acknowledge there is a concern about the crisis in Darfur, and change it to Sudan. Then it listed what could be looked at and addressed and was focused on investment.

•(1235)

The Chair: Yes, it was.

Mr. Paul Dewar: What might come out of that, one would deduce, is that one of the ways of dealing with the crisis is investment or not. That's why you do a study.

I'm wondering if we go back to the original motion and substitute Sudan for Darfur, take out the all-parliamentary group and add whatever it was, NGOs and civil society, if that would be acceptable to Mr. Martin. It brings back the spirit of what he wanted. It has to go beyond Darfur. It's Sudan in general. It deals with—

The Chair: It still links it as a crisis.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Yes, and it's a focus on experts and NGOs, etc., and it reports its findings to the House. In other words, what I'm suggesting is to substitute Sudan for Darfur and take out the all-party parliamentary group and add the NGOs and civil society and take it from there.

Hon. Keith Martin: The other aspect of this is dealing with the solutions that are required to deal with the genocide in the country. I don't have an issue with all-party at all. You and I know that I'm happy to have it in there, but it would be a shame for us not to include the other aspects, because other aspects have to be dealt with to deal with the larger conflagration that is about to occur in that country.

The Chair: Again, for those two meetings we'd deal with that and we'd never get around to doing the study on the financing.

The point of this motion.... My responsibility here is to say what the motion is asking for when these motions are brought forward. The concern of the government was that it's more finance than foreign affairs. Well, we've got to the point where I've ruled that although it may have been better answered at finance, we're going to see if we can get those departments to come and clearly indicate the types of investments going on there and how perhaps certain changes

might come out of what we see going on there—but this now goes a different step; it's not finance's any more.

Hon. Keith Martin: If it's the will of the committee not to go there, then it's the will of the committee not to go there. Then we have to go back to the original and just vote on it and move forward, right? If it's the will of the committee not to deal with the issue of other solutions to deal with this crisis, then that's the will of the committee, and so be it. We go back to Mr. Dewar's original motion with the minor amendments that he said, and we vote on it. I have to take out all that other stuff, because if you, Mr. Chair, rule that it's out of order, then I have to come back with another motion.

The Chair: It would be in order to present that motion at a later date, but it would be out of order in amending Mr. Dewar's motion, so if you withdraw your....

Hon. Keith Martin: Sure, and then I'll come back with another one.

Mr. Paul Dewar: To be clear here, the changes would be as follows: "That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, as part of its ongoing concern for the crisis in Sudan"—that's a change—"in consideration of issues of CSR, invite officials from DFAIT, CIDA, and other relevant departments, as well as non-governmental organizations and civil society, to appear before the committee to share their knowledge about what Canadian public and private funds are currently invested in Sudan and to explore legislative initiatives the Canadian government could put forward to set regulations for such investments, and report to the House on its findings."

The Chair: We have a withdrawal on the amendment; I still have Mr. Goldring and Madame Barbot on the speakers list. Are you okay?

You're all right.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

•(1240)

The Chair: Lunch is available there, and we have another 16 motions. I suggest we recess for five minutes. Nobody leaves the room; grab some lunch.

We'll recess for five minutes.

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_____ (Pause) _____

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•(1245)

The Chair: The next motion on the paper is that pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development conduct a study of the violent response of the Burmese regime to democratic movements in Burma.

I'll invite Mr. Goldring to speak to his motion, please.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Thank you very much.

It's very apparent there has been an escalation in violence and repression of democratic actions in Burma, and it's all been very topical. Historically, in 1988 the citizens of Burma rose up nationwide, and since then they've basically been under a military-led government that has consistently participated in violent repression of democratic ideals and freedoms.

In light of our past investigation and the study on democracy, I believe this is very well suited to fit in with it and Canada's overall support for freedom, democracy, and human rights in the rule of law as an expression of our values of foreign policy. It's very appropriate for us to do this investigation, this study, and I will certainly be seeking support for that premise.

The Chair: Mr. Dewar is next, and then Madame Barbot and Mr. Wilfert.

Mr. Paul Dewar: I wonder if I can intervene for a moment on the business in front of us. Before we go on to debate this motion, I want to make sure we are going to be able to schedule a time for this committee to meet on the estimates, which kind of fell off the table. I'm extremely concerned that we're not going to get to them.

The Chair: As soon as we're done this motion, I'm going to entertain a motion for Mr. Wilfert to move to the...

Mr. Paul Dewar: People know how I feel about Burma. I'll move on.

The Chair: Okay, good.

Madame Barbot.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: In the context of the sanctions announced by Mr. Bernier, I do not really understand why we would carry out such a study now. What is the connection? Why is this study coming up now? It seems to me that the sanctions clearly show what has happened, and they will obviously have a certain effect.

Is it really the time to undertake this study? Should we not in fact wait for the sanctions to be implemented and to see what will happen?

• (1250)

[English]

The Chair: This motion does not say that we will immediately proceed to a study on Burma. It says that we plan to do a study on Burma and the response by the Burmese regime to the democratic movement in Burma. I think it comes out of our report tabled in June on Canada's role in democratic development around the world. Certainly in a place like Burma we made a prompt response to what was going on there.

This committee is expected to study, or have subcommittees study, issues as they come onto the world stage. I commend Mr. Goldring for bringing this motion forward because it is very pertinent right now. At least we can say we have adopted a motion to study Burma. Right now our studies are taken up well into February.

Madame Barbot.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: I would agree with you if that is what the motion said, but that is not the case. The motion says that we are

going to study the violent response of the government. We would have to agree on a change in that respect. If the motion is to study what is happening overall in Burma, that is fine with me, but if it is limited to the government's violent response, that would be different.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Goldring may want to speak to that. I think it's a study of how they are responding to democracy promotion in Burma. It's not Canada's democracy promotion; it's when we see the monks and everyone else in Burma who are asking for more freedom. So it is a violent response of the Burmese regime.

Speaking from the chair—and maybe this is out of order—I think it is a positive thing to say that our committee is aware of what's going on there and we have passed a motion. This does not say that tomorrow, or before December 14, we'll be moving to a major study; but it does say that we will look at what's going on there.

Mr. Wilfert.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: That was the clarification I wanted, and I wondered then at some point when we move forward, what specific parameters we might be looking at. Is there going to be a particular emphasis that we are going to look at with regard to the response? Are we going to look at our sanctions? Are we going to look at the response of the government of Burma specifically? We need to know what the focus will be. Are we going to look at the role of the international community? Are we going to look at everything? If that is the case, that will dictate how long we are going to look at it.

The Chair: Mr. Chan, go ahead, please—

Hon. Raymond Chan: Thank you.

The Chair: —unless, Mr. Chan, you wanted Mr. Goldring to fill you in and you could respond to his perspective.

Hon. Raymond Chan: Yes.

Mr. Peter Goldring: I believe the comment I made when I opened was that there has been an ongoing response of violence since 1988. Now, of course there has been an escalation of this violence and more so. Certainly we might consider waiting to see how the sanctions are working, but I think we have an international responsibility here, in light of our study on democracy and other initiatives, to indicate to the world that we want to be proactive on this and not simply wait for the response to the sanctions. Because what we're really talking about here is responding to the violence, and this violence has been historical as well as very recent.

The Chair: Mr. Chan.

Hon. Raymond Chan: First of all, I applaud Mr. Goldring for bringing this issue up, and I would support the motion. The only issue I have, though, is that I don't know whether Burma or Myanmar is a good example for us to study what Canada's impact is or could be to push for democratic development, as an example, to highlight what we can do around the world, because our influence on Burma is very limited. The bilateral trade last year between Canada and Burma was only \$8 million, and in terms of diplomats, we pretty well don't have any offices in Burma. Also, we had some types of sanctions against Burma for a long time—I think way back in 1995-1996. The types of exports that people can make to Burma are under scrutiny. There can be only humanitarian exports. Exports that are associated with humanitarian support were allowed into Burma before the government declared this type of sanction, and the impact is pretty well nil.

So I support the motion to send a message that we care—I think that's important—but at the same time, I wouldn't highlight it too much to the rest of the world because this situation was so frustrating for us—

•(1255)

The Chair: Who's us?

Hon. Raymond Chan: The government of Canada has been paying attention to this issue since 1988, with different governments, different parties in government, and yet the impact is nil. So I would not play up Canada's role in the world by using Burma as an example of our interfering. That's the only warning that I would raise.

The Chair: No. I think, Mr. Chan, you're right. That's why I'm with you. I think that this motion is worded well. I applaud the government for not coming forward and saying that in light of all the wonderful things that our government has done in Burma.... It's very specific to say “let's know what's going on in Burma”. It's not a politicized type of motion.

Madame Barbot.

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: I understand what Mr. Goldring said earlier and the general purpose of the motion. I would move a few amendments in terms of formulation, so as to specify the government and the group we are referring to.

In French, “conduct a study of the violent response” is translated as “*se penche sur la réaction violente*”. I would suggest keeping the same terms as in English, that is “*procède à une étude sur la réaction violente*” and replace “*du gouvernement de la Birmanie*” with “*du régime militaire birman au récent soulèvement populaire pour la démocratie*”. I repeat, the French version would read as follows:

Le développement international procède à étude sur la réaction violente du régime militaire birman au récent soulèvement populaire pour la démocratie.

In that way, we really clarify the various components and we specify...

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Goldring, these are more clarification types of amendments—to put in the Burmese military regime and make those translation changes in the French translation—which I think are in order according to the table.

Could you say the last part again, Madame Barbot?

[Translation]

Mrs. Vivian Barbot: We refer to the recent popular uprising for democracy.

[English]

The Chair: So it would—

Mr. Peter Goldring: I'm not sure if it makes a huge difference, but if it provides more clarity and makes it more understandable, then absolutely.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Martin.

Hon. Keith Martin: Because we have so many studies going on, we're not going to get into this in a timely fashion, I would suggest, because of all the other commitments that our committee is making, and rightly so. Would it not be better if Madame Barbot were to put forth a strongly worded statement that would come from this committee being critical of the Burmese government or requesting the Canadian government to do a few things? That way we could get a strongly worded statement on the issue of Burma now when it is timely, rather than waiting sometime into the next spring or summer, because that's realistically when we'll get to this.

•(1300)

The Chair: There are always ways we can do things a little differently.

This is just saying that we are going to do a study. It's going to be on these parameters, the response to the democracy movement. I had a real response from the university in my constituency when they came down to my office and asked Canada to make a strong statement on Burma. As the committee chair, I stated that this committee I felt was very aware of what's going on in Burma and that there would be something coming out of this committee. That wasn't a promise I made based on any knowledge that Mr. Goldring was going to put this forward, but I think it is in order, in that this is the type of thing that committees do. They respond when there's something like this that is happening.

Mr. Goldring, it sounds like you're open to her amendment, which is on the table right now. We can always bring forward another motion at a later date. I'm going to call the question on this motion now.

(Motion as amended agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

The Chair: Mr. Obhrai is leaving.

Very quickly, Mr. Wilfert. We conclude here at one o'clock. You have about two minutes.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Chairman, if I might have the indulgence of the committee, I would like to propose a motion: That the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development agree to hold public hearings on the supplementary estimates by November 27—my understanding is that they would be adopted after November 29—and that we invite appropriate officials from DFAIT and CIDA to appear before the committee.

Obviously, if we don't deal with them by November 27 they will be deemed adopted. I think it's important that all members of the committee have an opportunity to review the estimates.

The Chair: All right.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Supplementary estimates, I mean. And invite the minister and relevant officials.

The Chair: Obviously that's—

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: Two ministers?

The Chair: I wonder when we're going to do that one.

Hon. Bryon Wilfert: CIDA minister and foreign affairs minister.

The Chair: All of a sudden I got a feeling this preliminary report, Madame Barbot, is getting smaller.

That motion is in order. It is on the paper here.

You're right, there are timelines that have to be followed.

We'll just have to leave that up to the clerks. There may be some changes on Bill C-9 then. I know the minister is away right now.

Mr. Gerald Schmitz: You probably need at least senior officials for the estimates.

The Chair: Mr. Wilfert's motion is that we invite him to come on the supplementary estimates.

(Motion agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

The Chair: Thank you for being here.

We're adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

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