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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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•(1720)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): I call this meeting to order.

The first thing on the committee business is that we want to be able to pass our steering committee report. The steering committee met this morning. We brought forward a schedule for some of the upcoming meetings and included a budget. I would ask you to take a look at your steering committee report: we include the list of witnesses, we study the draft report on Afghanistan for the next two meetings, we then have the witnesses for China, and we pass the budget.

Do we agree?

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

The Chair: We're going to continue with committee business.

Mr. Dewar.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Chair, I want to reflect the fact that I believe the government—I think Mr. Obhrai—posited a motion to have the Minister of Foreign Affairs come to committee. I'd like to have the committee pass the motion we're discussing now that's in front of us to allow my motion to come forward.

For those who weren't here last meeting, we were debating whether or not we could bring my motion forward to consider. To get things done here and to move along, I've noticed that the government, through Mr. Obhrai, has tabled the motion to have the minister come in front of committee. I simply encourage the government side to move the motion we have in front of us to have my motion considered.

Perhaps we could compromise and have a motion that will fit both the government's desire to have the minister and my motion to have the minister come forward so we can get some things done here.

The Chair: With all due respect, Mr. Dewar, I'm not certain if it's the portion of your motion to have him appear that's the problem. It may be the latter part of your motion. For that reason, it becomes a motion that is debatable.

Unless you were to move unanimous consent on this motion, Mr. Obhrai's motion has not had the 48 hours. That is my understanding.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Chair, I'm sorry to intervene, but I was simply noting that there had been a notice of motion from the government to have the minister come to this committee. I was simply asking that we consider my motion to have the minister

come. I was offering an olive branch of sorts when we get that motion in front of us, but we have to pass a motion to allow it to come to us in committee. We could then debate, amend, and meet the needs of both the government's desire and the opposition's desire to have the minister in front of us. We can't do that unless we are allowed to have a motion.

The Chair: That's right. You are 100% right on that one.

Mr. Obhrai.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): I will respond to Mr. Dewar when I have my full 48-hour notice of motion, which will come on Thursday. I will then respond to him.

The Chair: We will continue the debate of Mr. Dewar to bring his motion to the front.

We'll go to Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was speaking earlier about my concerns for this motion coming forward. After thinking about it, I've additional concerns.

Of course, one of the additional concerns here is looking at all the motions that are ahead of it. I would like to know why we would want to move another one forward of all these motions, starting with motion one of Madame Barbot:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, as part of its study on Canada's mission in Afghanistan, first and foremost invite the Canadian officials and diplomats who wrote the report entitled *Afghanistan 2006: Good Governance, Democratic Development and Human Rights* to appear before the Committee at the earliest possible time to present the report, and, secondly, that the Committee request access to the full and uncensored version of that specific report.

The Chair: That's not the first motion.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: No, he's just reading it.

An hon. member: He's reading a motion.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Yes, a motion among the many motions. When we are reviewing these motions, we have to consider why this one would not be brought forward.

Some hon. members: [Inaudible—Editor]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Please listen to him. Please listen to him.

Mr. Peter Goldring: And then we have other motions here too.

The Chair: Let's have some order. Mr. Goldring is making some very good points, ladies and gentlemen. Could I have some order, please?

●(1725)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Yes, he's making good points.

Mr. Peter Goldring: We have a series of motions, so are we going to be asked to bring those forward, in other words, to move the order of precedence on these motions?

The Chair: Just to answer that question, Mr. Goldring, if there were another motion to bring any other motion forward, we would deal with that motion at the time.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Yes, so it's all pertinent and relevant.

Now we have the motion here by Mr. Dewar:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development report to the House the following recommendations; that the government adopt the recommendations put forward in the *Advisory Group Report: National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility and the Canadian Extractive Industry in Developing Countries*, and that the government announces its proposals for the implementation of the Report's recommendations.

Well, why would that one be bumped? Why would we move reports ahead of that one? Why would we move motions ahead of the motions that this member already has in place?

We also have a motion here:

That, this committee recognizes that the situation in Sudan is a genocide, and reports to the House the recommendations that the government recognizes the crisis in Darfur as a genocide.

Well, is that not a timely issue too? Is that not an important issue? Why would we move that one aside in deference to another motion put forward here? So why are we doing this? Why are we wanting to ignore a well-meaning motion, one that is certainly long overdue in recognizing the crisis in Darfur and is important to the international community?

Now we have another one:

That the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs recognizes that Members of Parliament should decide whether or not Canada joins the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership and reports to the House the recommendation that Members of Parliament hold a debate and vote before Canada joins the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership.

Well, that's another important international issue and something that Canada can take great pride in. I think Canada and the Ukraine are the two countries in the world who have not subscribed to nuclear arms and have given up nuclear arms. So it's quite relevant here. So I again ask the question, why are we asking that one motion move ahead of this one? Does this one not have relevance for discussion in the committee here today?

And then there's a motion on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

That the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs reports to the House of Commons and it endorses the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 September 2007 and calls upon the Parliament and Government of Canada to implement fully the standards contained therein.

Once again, we have another motion from the same member. Are we to say that we're moving all of these motions aside for one particular one that has just come in? Once again, I'm saying that we've gone through the process of putting these on the agenda and bringing them forward. Now should we just move all of them aside when there are other alternatives than just moving this particular member's report forward?

Now we have another motion here from the member across, Mr. Martin:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development calls upon the Minister of International Cooperation to appear before the Committee to discuss Canada's International Development Program in Afghanistan.

Once again, this is something that is broad-ranging—and certainly more questions can be asked of a broad selection of particulars from the minister. And why would we move an all-encompassing motion and set it aside to have a narrowly focused motion replace it? Once again, you have to ask the question, why would we move a motion ahead of that particular motion, which is a much broader motion and much more encompassing motion, from which you could have more material benefits for the committee as a whole?

And then we have a motion from Mr. Khan:

That pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, in light of the importance of Pakistan to our security, that the Committee invite departmental officials and other experts to provide updated analysis of the situation in Pakistan....

Some hon. members: No, no.

●(1730)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Can we listen to him?

Mr. Peter Goldring: I'd like to go on for much longer.

The Chair: Order.

Unfortunately, the bells have started, Mr. Goldring. We appreciate your input on this motion, but we'll just have to wait. We'll deal with the rest of this at the next meeting.

We're adjourned.

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