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Chair

Mr. Michael Levitt

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

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• (1015)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.)): Good morning. We are resuming. MP Wrzesnewskyj has the floor on his notice of motion. Let me just read it out:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), and based upon the witness testimony of Mr. Mustafa Dzhemilev on May 16, 2019, and of Mr. Vladimir Kara-Murza on June 10, 2019, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development immediately report to the House the following:

1) That, in support of the historic truth and as requested by Mustafa Dzhemilev, the Crimean Tatar deportation of 1944 be recognized as a genocide perpetrated by Soviet dictator Stalin, and that May 18 be designated a day of remembrance for the Crimean Tatar deportation (Sürgünlik).

Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

We heard the testimony. We don't need to go through the testimony of Mr. Mustafa Dzhemilev or of Mr. Vladimir Kara-Murza from this past Monday. I believe it's important that this historical truth be acknowledged. I'd like to acknowledge the great work that Mr. Diotte has done on this file as well. I believe we should be able to find a consensus of all parties to move this motion.

Thank you.

The Chair: MP Diotte, please.

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Yes, I appreciate the praise, Borys.

It's unfortunate. We could have done this two and a half years ago. I had Bill C-306 that dealt with essentially the same thing: to recognize that the deportation of 200,000 Crimean Tatars by the Soviet Union in 1944 was a genocide. I will say that you were behind it, but, unfortunately, very, very few of the Liberals on your side were behind it. We could have had this said and done a long, long time ago. It really had widespread support and, unfortunately, the Liberal majority shut it down.

It's unfortunate that we have to be here today trying to provide a sort of lesser recognition of this. I know that people talked about the fact they couldn't use the word "genocide", but by all definitions it was certainly a genocide. These people were loaded into cattle cars and taken away. Certainly, we hear a lot of talk these days about genocide, but when they were deporting people and sending them off in cattle cars, and many, many of them died, it's just....

To this day I'm very sorry that you couldn't get more people behind this because....

The Chair: Thank you, MP Diotte.

MP Wrzesnewskyj, please.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Thank you.

I thank all members today who are, I believe, unanimously supportive of this.

I'd like to call the question.

The Chair: Is there further debate?

Ms. Alleslev.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): I just wonder if you could share with us what has changed in the last two years, and why at this point there is unanimous consent, whereas when Mr. Diotte put the motion forward earlier, there was not. What information or what sentiment has changed, so that we can all be clear on what the difference is and why this is now something that the Liberal Party feels it can support at this point, whereas before it was unable to do so?

The Chair: MP Wrzesnewskyj.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Yes. I believe we have an opportunity right now, at this moment, to pass this motion unanimously. I think I've acknowledged the past and the good work that Mr. Diotte has done. Continuing to debate what happened years ago does not serve the purpose of making sure that this historic wrong is acknowledged and that this opportunity not be lost. If Mr. Diotte truly wishes to see this historic wrong righted, we have an opportunity right now to pass this motion unanimously. It will be a great achievement to be able to do this in a non-partisan way.

Once again, I call the question.

The Chair: With the question being called and seeing our time, I think—

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): There's still more debate.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: There's still more debate.

The Chair: Leona.

•(1020)

Ms. Leona Alleslev: I appreciate that and I'm very pleased that we'll have an opportunity to support this at this point, but I think the question I asked is fair and relevant. I think it is important for Canadians and for us to understand what has changed and, therefore, why now, with the information we have, we can support this when we couldn't previously. Again, this happened in 1944, and we've had clear information about it for many years.

The Chair: Seeing that the time is now 16 minutes to go, I am going to call the question on the motion at hand. The motion on the floor as read by MP Wrzesnewskij is—

Mr. Kerry Diotte: Chair, I indicated that I wanted to speak.

The Chair: —as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), and based upon the witness testimony of Mr. Mustafa Dzhemilev on May 16, 2019, and of Mr. Vladimir Kara-Murza on June 10, 2019,—

Mr. Kerry Diotte: Chair, I indicated that I wanted to speak.

The Chair: —the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development—

Mr. Kerry Diotte: Chair, I indicated I wanted to speak.

The Chair: —immediately report—

Mr. Kerry Diotte: You saw me. You saw that I wanted to speak on this.

The Chair: I did not. I have the witness list here.

Mr. Kerry Diotte: Chair, you looked right at me.

The Chair: I have the witness list here.

Mr. Kerry Diotte: You know I wanted to speak.

The Chair: Mr. Diotte, you're not a member of the committee. We did give you time to speak to the motion, but I'm reviewing—

Mr. Kerry Diotte: But you saw that I wanted to speak.

The Chair: If I had seen that you wanted to speak, I would have addressed it.

Mr. Kerry Diotte: You did.

The Chair: Seeing the timing now and that the question has been called, the motion further reads:

1) That, in support of the historic truth and as requested by Mustafa Dzhemilev, the Crimean Tatar deportation of 1944 be recognized as a genocide perpetrated by Soviet dictator Stalin, and that May 18 be designated a day of remembrance for the Crimean Tatar deportation (Sürgünlik).

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: It passes unanimously. I thank the members of this committee for their work on this.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Chair, on a point of order, I would like us to be able to proceed now to a discussion in public of a motion on the genocide of the Tamils.

Mr. Chair—

The Chair: Further, I don't have consent to proceed past 15 minutes. That's what we spoke about before. The bells are ringing, so at this point I'm going to have to adjourn.

The meeting is adjourned.

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