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**Subcommittee on International Human Rights of  
the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and  
International Development**

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**Tuesday, March 4, 2008**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Scott Reid**

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## Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

•(1315)

[*English*]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Roger Préfontaine):** We have quorum.

Your first item of duty is to proceed to the election of a chair. I'm ready to receive motions to that effect.

Mr. Sweet.

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** I nominate Scott Reid.

**The Clerk:** Mr. Sweet has moved that Mr. Reid be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

There being no further motions, is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Mr. Reid duly elected chair of the committee.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair (Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Thank you for choosing me as your chair.

The clerk informs me that the last time the committee met, there were two opposition vice-chairs. We could proceed to select them, or we could leave that and deal with it at a different time. If we don't pursue it now, then I suggest we move on to routine motions.

But we can deal with the vice-chair selection now, if it's the will of the committee. I simply throw that out as an observation.

Is there a desire to go forward with choosing the vice-chairs? All right.

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, CPC):** I nominate Mario Silva and Caroline St-Hilaire

[*Translation*]

as vice chairs of the subcommittee.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Are there any further nominations?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** I think it's a little unusual to do two nominations at the same time. We've just engaged in a little electoral reform.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** Let's proceed to routine motions.

The clerk has prepared a list, which he is circulating,

[*Translation*]

in both official languages.

[*English*]

He's informed me that the routine motions we'll be looking at are the same ones that were adopted in the last subcommittee. These things vary from time to time, but the ones you're looking at are the ones that were actually in use and had been adopted by the subcommittee for its most recent series of meetings.

Let's go through these. The very first one, as you can see, relates to services of the analysts from the Library of Parliament.

Mr. Silva moves that motion.

If there is no debate, I will assume that's adopted.

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

**The Chair:** The second motion is on reduced quorum: that the chair be authorized to hold meetings and receive evidence when a quorum is not present, provided there are at least three members here, including one member from the opposition parties.

Mr. Cotler moves that.

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

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Kenney.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Mr. Chair, I move the adoption of routine motions three through nine, inclusive.

**The Chair:** Is that agreeable to members of the committee? Done.

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

**The Chair:** Thank you.

The next thing that occurs to me—and of course members are free to interrupt me and suggest handling things differently—is that we need to choose a regular time for us to meet. It could be this time or a different time. Then, of course, we need to consider the items that ought to be on our agenda. As things stand now, we have an open agenda.

Might I suggest we start with the topics for discussion.

Mr. Marston, please.

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Are we entertaining what we're going to be addressing as a committee?

**The Chair:** That's what I'm suggesting, so if that's agreeable, please go ahead.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** There is one thing I'd like to see as a priority item and as the first business undertaken by this committee, and that's a review of the Omar Khadr case. I think it's very important.

I think everybody around this...I was going to call it a "horseshoe", but I guess it's not quite that. I don't think anyone here would lack the understanding as to why that is an issue that we should be addressing—having witnesses in, garnering evidence, and making a report to the foreign affairs committee.

**The Chair:** Okay, the Omar Khadr case is down and noted.

Mr. Silva, please, then Mr. Sweet.

**Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.):** I noticed, in looking at other human rights committees throughout the western world, that every parliament has dealt with the issue of extraordinary rendition, with the exception of Canada. That's one of the few places that have not dealt with the issue of extraordinary rendition. It's not really linked with Omar Khadr, but if you want to deal with the whole issue of rendition and Guantanamo, then I'm okay with that. I just think that we, as a Parliament, need to look at that issue.

There are a lot of great reports from the House of Commons in the U.K., the House of Lords, and also the Council of Europe—a lot of European parliaments—but Canada has not taken up that issue. I know we had the whole issue with the Arar commission, but still I think we, as a human rights committee, should look at that issue as well.

**The Chair:** Okay. The next on my list was Mr. Sweet, *et après ça*, Madame St-Hilaire.

**Mr. David Sweet:** I have one that also plays into timing, so I guess we're going to touch on both things that you introduced, Mr. Chair.

Shirin Ebadi, who's a Nobel laureate as well as the advocate for the Kazemi family, is going to be in town on Thursday, or at least available on Thursday, so my suggestion would be that we capitalize on that. I think her testimony as an Iranian dissident would be of great value to us.

By the way, I have her bio here in both official languages, if you want to distribute it to committee members.

I will just see if the committee would be agreeable to having her come on Thursday, between 9 and 11 o'clock.

• (1320)

**The Chair:** Okay. What I'm going to suggest, as a starting point, is that under our rules, only the clerk can distribute those. If they're in both official languages they can be distributed immediately. So that'll be taken care of.

Let's deal with any questions of timing after we've gone through our list.

Did you have any further suggestions, Mr. Sweet? You still have the floor, if you'd like.

**Mr. David Sweet:** No, that's fine.

**The Chair:** In that case, we'll go to Madam St-Hilaire.

[Translation]

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to talk about my NDP colleague's motion. I do not know if the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development passed a motion to debate the case of Omar Khadr. However, I do know that a motion to that effect was tabled. In any event—perhaps those who served on this committee in the past will remember—the foreign affairs and international development committee always passes along its requests very kindly to us. Therefore, I imagine that we will be compelled to examine this matter shortly.

I thought the only item of business was the election of the chair. I did not think that we would be discussing future business. I would like us to keep the book open and not finalize things this afternoon. I would like the committee to reconsider the Cuba question. Twice we have started our study, and both times we have not finished our work. Some changes have recently taken place in Cuba. I think it is our duty to see this study through to the end.

That's all for now.

[English]

**The Chair:** All right. I have down here Cuba, Omar Khadr, and [Translation]

I'm in favour of our coming back later to the items on our agenda.

[English]

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Could I get on the list, do you think?

**The Chair:** Actually, the next on the list is you, Mr. Kenney.

[Translation]

Have you anything further, Ms. Saint-Hilaire?

[English]

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Okay, Mr. Kenney.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** *Merci.*

First of all, Mr. Chairman, as this is my first chance to speak, I'd like to thank my colleagues for their support while I was chairman under unusual circumstances, I guess, given my other position in the last session. I thought we worked together very well on a non-partisan basis on issues of deep concern to all of us.

I didn't want to continue putting some members of the committee in a possibly awkward position by having a member of the ministry in the chair. I think it's worked out very well for the committee, because we have a much more confident chair in Mr. Reid than we did in the last session.

I'd like to also welcome Mr. Reid and Mr. Sweet to the committee. They're both individuals who have a long-demonstrated personal interest in issues of human rights that precedes their election to Parliament in both cases. So I think their presence here will only help to improve our deliberations in as non-partisan a fashion as possible.

[Translation]

Regarding the subcommittee's agenda, I would like to stress what Ms. St-Hilaire said.

First of all, we must finish the work undertaken during the last session. I suggest that we review progress on our report on bilateral relations between Canada and China in the context of human rights in China.

We submitted our report to the foreign affairs and international development committee in March of last year, as I recall. However, no follow-up action has been taken. If the main committee ignores our reports and our motions, then the very purpose of our subcommittee is called into question. This is important, in my view. If the main committee ultimately decides that we have no powers, then there is nothing we can do. However, I think we should, at the very least, put this question to the foreign affairs and international development committee by way of a motion calling on it to adopt our report on China.

On the other hand, I totally agree with what Ms. St-Hilaire said about Cuba. We have a lot of work to do on this file. The committee has heard from about 10 witnesses who travelled to Ottawa to testify. I think we owe it to them to draw up a report or, at the very least, to table a motion. The subcommittee's research officer has drafted a good number of summaries of the testimony presented and sketched out the main points of a possible report.

• (1325)

[English]

Here is one other thing I would like to give consideration to for possible hearing, which I don't think would take more than one or two hearings. A number of members of the Coptic community in Canada have approached me consistently over the past two or three years to express concern about the situation of their compatriots, principally in Egypt, as it relates to freedom of religion and human rights. I would like, at some point, for us to provide an invitation to them to present and perhaps, if it would be appropriate, an opportunity for the Egyptian ambassador to respond.

Finally, let me second Mr. Sweet's prospective motion as it relates to Shirin Ebadi. I found out through friends of hers last week that Madam Ebadi is going to be visiting Ottawa later this week and that she has, through them, expressed a willingness to appear before our committee if we were to extend an invitation. She is the Nobel Peace Prize laureate from 2003. Is that right, Irwin? You probably know her. Yes, it was 2003. She is regarded as one of the leading, if not the leading, spokesmen for women's rights and human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

One of the things we discussed, colleagues, in the last session was that when we have superstars like this coming through Ottawa, we should try to make ourselves available as a public forum for them to address Parliament through us. If we could work it into our

schedules while she is here, it would both be beneficial to us and assist her in telling Canadians what is going on in Iran.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cotler, please.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** I'll take up where Jason Kenney left off. I think it would be helpful to have Shirin Ebadi appear before us. I know she's going to be speaking at McGill this Friday on Islam and human rights. She also represented Mrs. Kazemi, so she has a lot of human rights experience to commend her as a witness.

I also support the other initiatives that have been mentioned. I particularly want to say that on the matter of China I think we did some excellent work as a committee and I don't think that thing should be left in abeyance somehow. We should take it up, as Jason Kenney mentioned, and I'd say the same with regard to Cuba. I've received correspondence, as I suspect others have, on the disposition of the Cuba hearing, and I think we ought to draw it to a close.

I support the other suggestions that have been made, both with regard to a hearing on Omar Khadr, which raises larger issues, and on the question of rendition.

Finally, I'd like to make a modest suggestion of my own, although it seems that with all these suggestions we may be here for a long time. In the fall we had a visit from a distinguished parliamentarian from the United Kingdom, John Mann, who met with a number of people here. He conducted an inquiry into anti-Semitism in the U.K., but he came here to encourage other parliaments to engage in similar inquiries. [*Inaudible—Editor*]...as it happened, I was speaking with him this morning, and it appeared to me that this might be an appropriate forum for us to conduct a Canadian version of an inquiry into anti-Semitism.

• (1330)

**The Chair:** Mr. Silva.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, in respect of how we're going to proceed, I think this committee does incredible and valuable work and that all of us generally care about human rights. I think that's one of the reasons we all wanted to be on this committee.

Unfortunately, as you will see, the work that goes on here rarely makes it to Parliament, to the House. It stays at the foreign affairs committee, because we're only a subcommittee. It's not going to be easy to get around that. Our goal should be for this committee to become a full standing committee.

In the meantime, there are some valuable things we can do. One is to offer ourselves as committee members whenever there are distinguished human rights individuals such as Shirin Ebadi. We should offer to meet with her as a committee. I think this is a great forum in which to highlight some of the human rights violations taking place in her country. She's a great spokesperson for women's rights and for the people of Iran, where many atrocities are taking place. She's definitely a person worth meeting with.

There are going to be other dignitaries in the area from time to time, and we should also make ourselves available to them. I think it's useful to provide this testimony, this witnessing, this recounting of stories. We need to let the public know what's taking place. So I would hope that we use these opportunities wisely.

As for our work, I don't think we should be going into it any further. As I think Jason mentioned, these long-term, one-year studies like we did on China, as valuable as they are, become problematic if we can't get them to the House and make them public. Maybe we should focus on smaller issues. This way we would be able to broaden our scope.

I know Irwin mentioned anti-Semitism. I think that's a great idea if we can do it. We could also focus on Omar Khadr and other ad hoc issues. I think this would be useful for the committee, because we would get a chance to get it on the record. It would become public. This way we don't have to worry about long reports that may not ever be tabled in the House, and we get our views out to the public.

**The Chair:** That sounds like a suggestion on the way we structure our proceedings, as opposed to their subject matter. I think that's how you intended it.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Mr. Marston.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** I have just one very quick thing on the Khadr case. He's going to trial in June, so if we can put that up front, I think it's critical; otherwise there won't be any value in what we do.

**The Chair:** All right.

We'll have Mr. Kenney, please.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Just picking up on that theme of timeliness, one of the reasons we wanted to do the China report in the last session was for a number of things. You'll recall that it was preceded by the Burton report, commissioned by DFAIT, and then an intervention by the Canadian Coalition on Human Rights in China asking the government and this committee to review the bilateral dialogue. We now have the Olympics coming up, so human rights in China will be a very prominent issue in the first half of this year. If there's anything we can do to encourage the main committee to dislodge the report, it would be timely.

Also, obviously, with the recent ostensible leadership change in Cuba, it would seem to be an opportune moment for this committee to express itself on that issue as well.

The main reason I want to do a second intervention is just to remind the committee, and particularly our new members here, that one issue we've looked at intermittently has been human rights in Iran. We've never committed ourselves to a major study, but we've had periodic testimony, often based on a particular issue or on who was in Ottawa. Mr. Cotler in particular was pushing one dimension, which was incitement to genocide. I think we did adopt a motion on that in the end, did we not?

I just wanted to mention, with Shirin Ebadi coming to town as one other item—and we're bloating up the possible work agenda here—that there are actually two other very prominent dissidents of Iranian origin who happen to be in Canada right now. One of them is an Iranian Canadian, Professor Ramin Jahanbegloo, who spent, as you

will recall, six months in solitary confinement in Evin prison thanks to Saeed Mortazavi, the prosecutor general, whose indictment this committee called for in a motion last year.

Professor Jahanbegloo is now, thankfully, back safely in Canada. I've spoken with him, and he would be more than happy to come and share his experiences with this committee.

Also living in Toronto for the next few weeks is Akbar Ganji. If I could ask the clerk to please.... I have bios of both these individuals in both official languages, Mr. Chairman.

Akbar Ganji is a very prominent Iranian journalist who spent five and a half years in the Evin prison, mainly in solitary confinement. I stand to be corrected, but I believe he was also tortured by the agents of Saeed Mortazavi. Akbar Ganji is perhaps, with the exception of Shirin Ebadi, regarded as the most prominent dissident of the Islamic republic's government in Iran.

So if we have Ms. Ebadi—I'll just throw this out there—consider inviting these two gentlemen from Toronto, although I think for Thursday it would be very short notice for them. Or consider inviting them to a later meeting to continue the theme of Iran that we've looked at periodically. I'm not suggesting a whole lot more work on that. The reason I'm flagging these two people is that Ramin Jahanbegloo is fresh back to Canada, and it would be nice to welcome him here to Ottawa. Mr. Ganji is on a six-month visa, which expires, I think, about six weeks from now.

Professor Cotler was on a panel—excuse me, Mr. Cotler—

• (1335)

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** I'm still professor.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Professor Emeritus Cotler and I were on a panel with Mr. Ganji in Montreal in, I think, December, and he, I think, expressed a willingness to appear before us. We should underscore that for people like Shirin Ebadi and Akbar Ganji to be willing to appear before us in public in front of the Parliament of a western country is an act of unbelievable courage in and of itself. And I think we should honour that if we have the opportunity.

**The Chair:** All right. That is duly noted.

I don't have anybody else on the list. Did any hands go up? All right.

People are free to interrupt me if they want, but it would seem logical for me to just mention a couple of housekeeping items at this point, one of which is the subject of the China report. The China report did come up, and the analyst advises me that because this subcommittee ceased to exist, the report also ceased to exist at the prorogation. Therefore, it will be necessary for this subcommittee to re-adopt that report in order to be able to take it before the main committee.

We had a chat earlier, and the analyst also said there might a few little dates and statistics that have to be changed.

**Mr. Marcus Pistor (Committee Researcher):** If I may, I went through the summary of witness testimony on Cuba, and there are some minor factual changes—newer numbers of political prisoners, and so forth—that should be substituted. That's not a report, so those are easy for me to do.

As for the report on China, we can do those corrections if the subcommittee considers the report again; but I think the subcommittee would have to re-adopt the report before it goes back to the main committee.

**The Chair:** We could do that. We'd have to do that at a later meeting, obviously, to get it around to everybody first. I guess the other thing is that we'd have to go in camera for that.

**Mr. Marcus Pistor:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Right.

Would it be agreeable if we were to put that on an agenda for perhaps a meeting next week? Would that be reasonable to everybody?

Mr. Marston.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** I have no problem with doing that, but we were pretty close to the final draft of the report on Cuba, as I recall, but we hadn't adopted it.

• (1340)

**Mr. Marcus Pistor:** No, the Cuba document right now is not officially a draft report; it's just a summary of witness testimony, so I would need instructions if you wanted more specific recommendations, and so forth. So it's a discussion document.

We can redistribute those two documents as they are, pretty much in the next day or so, for all the members, and then meet next week if you wanted to discuss that.

**The Chair:** I am sorry, but I think I am the source of the confusion. I kept saying Cuba when I meant China, but I think we could probably do the report on China pretty quickly, I am guessing. The Cuba document would involve a good deal more work because it's just a summary of testimony.

Mr. Silva, please.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** I just want to have some clarification on the China report. How do we make that report public?

If it's adopted here, does that mean it still has to go to the foreign affairs committee and that it's still confidential?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** And there is no way we could maybe just allow the report to be public? Can this committee do that, or not?

**The Chair:** To the best of my knowledge, that's not permissible under the rules.

The clerk advises me that there is no way around that. I suppose some of the subject matter could be dealt with in a different manner—but that would be separate from the report. My understanding of how this works is that it's presented at an in camera meeting of the full committee, so even the presentation is something that remains in camera.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** On Mario's point, it seems to me that maybe there is a parliamentary trick we could use to legitimize its release. For instance, when we propose motions, those motions are not considered in camera, but they are technically in the form of a report to the main committee. For instance, our motion on Saeed Mortazavi and our motion on incitement to genocide—indeed, several of us have had motions—all of those were considered in ex camera sessions and were public. I stand to be corrected, but they were in the parliamentary form of a report to the standing committee.

Why could we not therefore take the 60 pages, or whatever they are, of the China report and word this as a simple motion and consider it ex camera and adopt a motion saying, the committee hereby adopts the following motion, colon—and then next 60 pages would run? It seems to me that if the committee is not acting in good faith, we're not bound to wait for over a year for our work to be public.

**The Chair:** I see several hands.

If you don't mind, I'll just go to Mr. Silva first, because it's his thought. Then we'll go to Mr. Marston and Mr. Cotler.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I like what Mr. Kenney had to say. We had worked very hard and certainly the researchers have worked very hard on that report on China. There's a great interest out there in the public to know what's in that report. There's also great interest all over the world to know how human rights dialogues are conducted. Right now one of these very mysterious secrets out there is how countries are dealing with their human rights dialogues, whether they're working, whether they're effective or not.

This is going to be a very unique report. There are not that many reports out there. You just google it or you try to find it through the Library of Parliament or anywhere else—information and dialogues throughout the world—they just don't have that information. It certainly will add greatly to the body of knowledge that's needed out there as to how Canada is conducting their human rights dialogue with China.

That's one of the reasons I think this report is so important, so valuable to get out there in the public. I'm just terrified that if it goes to the committee again it's just going to sit there in a black hole and they're not going to deal with it. There would be an election by then and all this work would be for naught.

**The Chair:** Mr. Marston, please.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Well, my understanding of that report is that we already sent that report to the committee. It was not referred back to us, as I recall, which means, to my mind, that they do not have ownership of it.

**Mr. Marcus Pistor:** Prorogation basically kills all committee work, and the subcommittee ceased to exist completely with prorogation.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** So this is now a new edition of our report.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** The report as a legal thing has evaporated.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** I understand that now.

I do not disagree on the value of this report, because it is significant in my opinion. And to be blunt, there were people who deliberately squashed it, and I'm not happy about that, as would anybody who worked on it.

The only thing I'd be a bit concerned about is whether we would be at risk if we followed Jason's view of how to deliver this. Would we not be at risk of being in contempt of Parliament doing that?

•(1345)

**The Chair:** I think it would probably depend on how we do it. One possibility is for me to make some inquiries and get back to you. If that's agreeable to members of the committee, we can do that. Perhaps I can report back at our next meeting.

I'm going to go to Mr. Cotler first.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** It seems to me the entire hearings were of a public character. I don't see how that which is of a public character can cease to be that. There ought to be a mechanism whereby that which is of a public character is just bound and released as this set of hearings before this committee.

What about the subcommittee's report? If adopted by the subcommittee, could that be moved in the House itself, in concurrence in the House?

**The Chair:** Mr. Kenney.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** The whole problem is that the main committee has to report it to the whole House. We can't circumvent the main committee. We are technically a creature of the standing committee and we can only report to it. This has always been the problem.

**The Chair:** We can't report publicly. I think I'm still looking for an answer with the procedural experts, the clerk's office. Is there a way of taking the report, presenting it as a motion, without encountering any technical problems? Perhaps I could find that out.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** I think we should get some creative procedural advice on whether there's a remedy to this.

**The Chair:** I'm sure it's always creative and always thoughtful.

*Madame St-Hilaire, s'il vous plaît.*

[Translation]

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We all agree that subcommittee members are disenchanted and feel that their efforts are wasted. The report on China is a good example of this malaise.

Foreign affairs matters are also at issue. I would not want to be publicly chastised by the foreign affairs and international development committee. We are the ones who worked on this file and I would not want to make public, through some roundabout way, something that people do not wish to make public for one reason or another.

Our first challenge would be to have the chair find out what the subcommittee needs to do to become a full committee. I do not know what the procedure for that is. Must the leaders or the whips become involved? Must we make a specific request? Almost everyone seated at this table agrees that this is a challenge worth pursuing. Human rights are an important topic, but this is a subcommittee and I feel

that this is viewed as a secondary topic. We have neither a human rights minister, nor a human rights committee. Perhaps this is a battle that the subcommittee should take up, instead of taking a difficult route to do things it does not necessarily have the right to do.

[English]

**The Chair:** The clerk has advised that it is the Standing Orders that list the various committees of the House. We would require a change to the Standing Orders that lists the human rights committee. If that were set up through a change to the Standing Orders, the procedure and house affairs committee would then go through the process of appointing members to that committee, as it does with all standing committees.

Mr. Silva, please.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** That's right. I think we all need to lobby our own whips and House leaders about having this committee as a full standing committee. You, as chair, should lobby your own government to see if that could happen.

I've spoken to my whip about this issue. I think the concern for some is that there are so many standing committees at the moment that they are worried about how another standing committee will impact the members. I've asked why it is not possible to have this as a standing committee with the same composition. Why do you have to have five from the Conservatives and five from the Liberals, etc.? The composition has worked very well. Why don't we keep the same composition? It's not an extra burden. I think there's a way for them to do that. If there's agreement, then we could proceed.

It should be one of the main goals of this committee, to try and make it a full standing committee. Otherwise, you're going to be very frustrated, Mr. Chair, knowing that a lot of our work is not going to go very far.

•(1350)

**The Chair:** That's duly noted.

We've come to the end of the speaking order. Is there anyone else who wishes to make a comment?

Seeing no one, we have one item that requires immediate action, and that is the question of Shirin Ebadi coming before this committee.

I gather, Mr. Sweet, you are the one who introduced this. She is in town on Thursday only?

**Mr. David Sweet:** Yes, that's the only time I see that we can accommodate her.

**The Chair:** Did you suggest a specific time?

**Mr. David Sweet:** I suggested 9 to 11 a.m.

**The Chair:** Would she be available, if we were to do that?

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Would this be a one-time meeting? That timing is problematic for me, as I have committees.

**Mr. David Sweet:** That's correct. It's certainly fine with me, Mr. Chairman. It's to accommodate her schedule, as she is in Montreal the next day.

**The Chair:** Bearing in mind that this is a one-off, is it agreeable that we invite Shirin Ebadi to come here from 9 to 11 a.m. on Thursday?



**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Technically, for us to consider that as a motion would require unanimous consent to waive the 48-hours' notice provision.

**The Chair:** Is it 48 hours, or is it two sleeps?

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Whatever it is, I think formally you need unanimous consent to waive the notice requirement.

**The Chair:** You've initiated a procedural discussion up here, Mr. Kenney. The clerk tells me it is substantive and that we need unanimous consent.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** To consider the motion.

**The Chair:** Mr. Kenney is quite right. Do we have unanimous consent to consider Mr. Sweet's motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Now that we have that, is it agreeable to have Shirin Ebadi before us from 9 to 11 a.m. on Thursday?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The clerk and researcher have advised that the updated versions of the China report and the Cuba summary of testimony will be circulated to your offices and hopefully available to you by the Thursday meeting.

The other matter I want to discuss is the question of choosing a firm date for our regular meetings. We could meet at this hour or at a different time. Are there any comments on that?

Mr. Marston.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** We met on Tuesdays from 11 until 1 o'clock. That worked well for me, but I don't know about the rest of the committee.

**The Chair:** I have to admit it's problematic for me and Mr. Sweet.

I saw Mr. Silva's hand.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** I was going to agree with that time, but it looks like it's problematic.

Could we be provided with a list of possible times for the next meeting and then see what time fits everybody's schedule?

**The Chair:** The clerk has just handed me such a list. I gather he already did that exercise with you.

Why don't you explain the problems to us?

• (1355)

**The Clerk:** I have a list here of different times of committees and when members sit. There is no magic solution here. The subcommittee originally asked to sit at 5:30, and that doesn't seem to be possible. My conclusion through this exercise is that Tuesdays from one to two o'clock is the most possible option.

**The Chair:** Madame St-Hilaire.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire:** So then, the committee would meet for only one hour?

**The Chair:** For one hour only, on Tuesday.

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** Do any other committees sit until 1 p.m.?

[*English*]

Excuse me. I understand.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Sweet, are you on that committee that meets until one o'clock?

**Mr. David Sweet:** Yes.

**The Chair:** So Wednesdays are out. Is there no other time?

**Mr. Mario Silva:** We could look at meeting twice a week between one and two o'clock on Tuesday, and one and two o'clock on Thursday. Would that work?

**The Chair:** No. What about the time we just discussed? That was problematic with you, Mr. Silva.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** That's right. I'm at committee at that time.

Can we work on this for the next meeting and then decide?

**The Chair:** Maybe we can come back to this at the end of the Thursday meeting. Is it possible to distribute copies? There's no big secret here is there? Then we can bring copies with us and look at this at the next meeting so we're all informed.

Is there any other matter that anyone wants to discuss before we adjourn? No.

We are adjourned.





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