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Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

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• (1000)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.)): Hello, everyone. It's great to see you.

Welcome to meeting number 22 of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

As you are all aware, pursuant to Standing Order 106(4), the committee is meeting today to consider a request received by the clerk and submitted by four members of the committee to discuss their request to undertake a study of the exportation of Russian turbines.

I understand that all members are present virtually today. As such, I'd ask that all members exercise indulgence and patience.

As always, interpretation is available through the globe icon at the bottom of your screens.

For members participating in person, if they are there, please keep in mind the Board of Internal Economy's guidelines for mask use and health protocols.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all participants that taking photos or screenshots of your screen are not permitted.

Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. Furthermore, when speaking, please speak slowly and clearly for the sake of our interpreters. When you are not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

Also, this is a reminder that all comments by members and witnesses should be addressed through the chair.

Thank you.

I'm waiting to hear from the clerk as to what the speaking order is.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Stephanie Bond): You may ask one of the members to present their motion, perhaps, if you'd like to begin with the study motion or the reasons for the meeting pursuant to Standing Order 106(4).

The Chair: We will hear the reasons for the meeting.

Madam Clerk, would you read that out for the benefit of all members.

The Clerk: As we received two letters, I would suggest that one of the members do so.

The Chair: Absolutely.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, I'm happy to bring forward my motion, if you would like.

The Chair: Absolutely, Ms. McPherson. The floor is yours.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you very much, Chair.

As you will all have received from the clerk, I did bring forward a notice of motion, and you should have received it yesterday. I can read it into the record, if that's appropriate.

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Foreign Affairs and International Development Committee undertake a study to examine the government's decision to circumvent Canadian sanctions to allow the export of Gazprom turbines; that this study consists of no fewer than 5 meetings; that the Minister of Natural Resources and Minister of Foreign Affairs appear before the committee, along with officials from their respective departments, no later than July 22nd, 2022; that representatives from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the Ambassador of Ukraine to Canada be invited to appear before the committee; and that committee members submit lists of additional witnesses by July 19th, 2022.

I brought forward this motion because, frankly, I was quite appalled by the decision made by the Government of Canada to waive the sanctions that we have put on Russia.

We've all worked very hard in this committee and in the House of Commons to ensure that we are standing with Ukraine and that we are doing everything we can to isolate and punish Putin for the incredible harms that he is doing to Ukraine and for the genocide he is perpetrating on Ukrainians.

When we take the opportunity...when it becomes uncomfortable and we waive these sanctions, the sanctions become basically.... They're no longer something that helps isolate the Russian Federation.

I would like more information about this. I would like to understand how the Government of Canada came to this dangerous decision. I wrote a statement about being very worried about the precedent this sets. Every time it becomes uncomfortable for us, we choose to waive sanctions. That's not how this should be working. The trust that we're putting in Putin's following through with any promises he makes is very dangerous. We're allowing the Russian Federation to weaponize energy around the world, which is extremely, extremely dangerous. We've already seen the Russian Federation weaponize food, and my worry is that this precedent means that our sanctions will become basically meaningless as we go forward.

I need to be able to ask questions of both the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Natural Resources. I'd like to hear from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. Of course, they are a pre-eminent voice in this space. The ambassador, who has come to this committee before, will be able to share some very important perspectives from the Government of Ukraine. I just think it's really important, despite the House not sitting at the moment, that this committee continue to work in this unprecedented time as Ukraine goes through this horrific war.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1005)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. McPherson.

I understand that next up is Mr. Oliphant.

The floor is yours, Mr. Oliphant.

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, happy summer to everybody. I hope that people have a bit of time for recreation as the summer continues.

I want to thank both opposition parties that have presented motions on this. I will say from the outset that the government side, the Liberal members, will be supporting having the special hearing or hearings, as decided by the committee, on the decision made by the government to grant a permit to ship and return the repaired turbines, which are being repaired in Montreal by Siemens, to Germany to ensure that it has energy security through the fall, especially as the weather changes.

My understanding is that this decision was not taken lightly and was taken with much conversation. I think it would be appropriate for members of Parliament to be briefed on how the decision was made and what its implications and ramifications are.

I begin by stating that we are in agreement with this. We think it's an appropriate use of parliamentary resources, including our human resources as parliamentarians. We think it is appropriate for government officials, particularly the ministers responsible for making this decision, to be called upon to appear before the committee to explain it. We think it is all appropriate and that the Canadian public, through us, has absolutely both the right and responsibility to hear this.

With respect to the motion that's on the floor, I'm going to suggest a few amendments that I think we could use to promote the work.

First of all, as I said, I think the motion is appropriate. However, I have a concern that five meetings are not needed for this process. I think there are two different issues at stake. One is a review of our sanctions. Particularly in this case the sanctions are unprecedented. Some 1,400—the last number I had was 1,400; it may be 1,500 now—have been levelled against the Putin regime, the Belarusian regime and others in support of the illegal war and invasion against Ukraine. I think it's absolutely appropriate that we do a review of that. There will be a statutory review required shortly with respect to the sanctions regime itself. As you know, we have regimes under three different pieces of legislation.

I think those two activities—a review of the effectiveness of our current sanctions, which are being done in concert with our allies around the world and on a personal level, is an appropriate piece of work to be doing, as is the requirement we will face fairly shortly to do a statutory review of the sanction regimes and the three pieces of legislation that we deal with in that regard.

However, with respect to the decision of the government to issue a permit to allow for time-limited return of repaired turbines to Germany to allow it to have energy, I don't think we need to have five meetings. Therefore, I would first move, that, after the semicolon in Ms. McPherson's motion, we strike the line “that this study consists of no fewer than 5 meetings” and allow that to be determined at a later date. We would have one meeting with the ministers, as requested, but then we'd determine whether we need more meetings in the future.

I hope we can get to that point. It's the summer, not that this should affect us completely, but I think we can get the points we need made as to why exactly the government made this decision and what its ramifications are from one—

• (1010)

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): On a point of order, we don't have any volume here. I can't hear Rob.

Ms. Heather McPherson: I can hear him.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): It seems okay on my side.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: I'm just checking. James, do you hear me now?

Okay. I'm glad you're listening. That makes me feel good on this Friday morning.

That's the first part of my amendment. It is that we simply strike “that this study consists of no fewer than 5 meetings” and allow that to be determined at a later date, after we have the first meeting. I'm totally in agreement that the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Foreign Affairs be invited to appear before this committee, along with their officials.

We can leave in “no later than July 22nd”; however, we believe that it is the convention of all the committees of the House that the clerk seeks the availability of ministers and their schedules. I would change that part to “as soon as possible”. That would be a scheduling activity by the clerk to ask the ministers to appear as soon as their schedules allow. My understanding from the ministers' offices is that there is willingness and readiness to appear. There's no reluctance or desire not to appear; it's just that scheduling and putting a date of July 22 in place could be problematic for one or both of these ministers.

That's the second part of this amendment.

The third part was that after “the Ambassador of Ukraine to Canada”, we add “the Ambassador of Germany to Canada and the Ambassador of the EU to Canada”. It's that we not only hear from the Ambassador of Ukraine, but also other affected countries. We would hear that through the ambassador of Germany and the ambassador of the EU, who is resident in Canada.

That's the third part of the amendment.

The last part of the amendment is in the last sentence after the last semicolon. We would strike the words “and that committee members submit lists of additional witnesses by July 19th, 2022” and actually keep this to the witnesses we strike today, which would be the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the ambassador of Ukraine, the ambassador of Germany to Canada and the ambassador of the EU to Canada. We think that would be an effective one or two meetings—whichever we are able to schedule—and we would be able to get enough for our committee to engage on this important topic.

That is my amendment. Just so it is clear, I would be amending that by striking the line “that this study consists of no fewer than 5 meetings”; striking “no later than July 22nd, 2022”, and changing it to “as soon as possible”; adding “the Ambassador of Germany to Canada and the Ambassador of the EU to Canada”; and striking the last part, which is “and that committee members submit lists of additional witnesses by July 19th, 2022”.

I would close by reiterating that we think this is an important piece of work for this committee to do. We think it should be quickly done. We think this committee has an important responsibility to hear from those ministers and also to hear from those ambassadors to understand the implications of this on Ukraine and its war effort against Russia, as well as from Germany and the EU and their requirement for energy security as they face the winter. Frankly, as the European Union is a huge contributor to the war effort in Ukraine, we need to understand the effect on Ukraine of Europe not having energy resources and its ability to support Ukraine in this illegal war.

That's my amendment. Thank you very much.

● (1015)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Oliphant. That was a whole number of friendly amendments.

We now go to Mr. Chong.

The floor is yours.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): I'm sorry, Michael. First off, I have a point of order.

Does the mover of the motion perceive those as friendly amendments? That would be the first issue. I just want to clarify that point.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): On a point of order, that's not really part of the process here. The amendment's on the floor and we debate it. Ms. McPherson can—

Hon. John McKay: Well, it certainly will influence the tenor of the debate if the mover of the motion doesn't perceive those as friendly amendments.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Chair, would you like me to intervene?

The Chair: Ms. McPherson.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Chair, I appreciate what my colleague has brought forward. Some of those amendments I would be more than happy to see as friendly, I guess is the term. Certainly having the German and EU ambassadors join us would be fantastic. I'm happy to strike the five meetings, because I do think we can determine as a committee how many meetings there should be. I think certainly it would be more than one, certainly more than two. This is a big issue, and we already have six witnesses we'd like to question.

However, I'm not willing to accept the friendly amendment to exclude the additional witnesses. I think there needs to be the opportunity for people around this table to bring forward additional witnesses if that is deemed necessary. I think this is an incredible slate that we've already set up with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the Ukrainian ambassador, the German ambassador, the EU ambassador and the two ministers. However, there may be others who can shed light on this, and I don't think we would want to exclude those from the conversation.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. McPherson.

Now we go back to Mr. Chong.

Mr. James Bezan: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Bezan. Welcome to the committee.

Mr. James Bezan: There's no such thing as a friendly amendment to start with, but there are, as Ms. McPherson pointed out, a number of different changes to the original motion.

Should we be dealing with these three substantial changes to the motion amendment by amendment rather than all in one broad, sweeping amendment?

I ask for your guidance on this.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Bezan, I completely agree. In the event they are adopted, they would have to be debated amendment by amendment, absolutely. The point is well taken.

Now we go to Mr. Chong.

Mr. Chong, the floor is yours.

Hon. Michael Chong: Before I begin, Mr. Chair, on a point of order, what amendment are we on, then?

The Chair: I don't believe we're—

Hon. Michael Chong: Personally, Mr. Chair, my advice is to treat all four changes that Mr. Oliphant has proposed as a single amendment, but if you want to break it down into four separate amendments, then please tell me what amendment we're on right now so I can speak to it.

● (1020)

The Chair: I'm advised by the clerk that we have to go through this amendment by amendment, so we're going to have to break it down.

Hon. Michael Chong: Great.

The Chair: We're on the first amendment.

Hon. Michael Chong: Okay. With respect to how many meetings we should have, we should have at least four meetings. I believe we could accomplish those over two days—a panel in the morning, a panel in the afternoon—and then a similar structure for the second day. That gives ample time for witnesses to be invited, to prepare, and for members to appear at the committee. I don't think any fewer than four meetings would work. The reason I think we need at least four meetings is that obviously, we're going to hear from Government of Canada officials. Obviously, we're going to hear from Ukrainian government officials, and then I think we need to hear from stakeholders.

Mr. Oliphant has suggested that we hear from the German and EU ambassadors, which I'm supportive of doing, but we also need to hear from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, and we need to hear from broader foreign policy experts who can put this into a broader context about natural gas supplies to Germany.

I'm fine with striking how many meetings we need to have, provided we are of the understanding that we have at least four meetings, and no fewer than that, and as many meetings as necessary to accommodate the witnesses we believe we need to be hearing from.

The final thing I'll say on the amendment in front of us is that I don't believe—and I know this is the fourth amendment—that if we do strike how many meetings we're going to have, it does not imply that the witness list is restricted to the six witnesses Mr. Oliphant has suggested.

Mr. Oliphant has suggested that we hear from only six witnesses, those being the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the ambassador of Ukraine to Canada, the ambassador of Germany to Canada and the ambassador of the European Union to Canada. I don't believe the witnesses should be restricted just to those six witnesses. I think we need to hear from witnesses beyond that.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chong.

Now we'll go to Mr. Genuis.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am supportive of this motion. It's virtually identical to the motion that was put on notice by my colleague Mr. Chong.

I am concerned by what appears to be an effort by the government on the one hand to say yes to hearings, but on the other hand to effectively water down the ability of the committee to do the detailed work that is required.

We need to hear not just from government and from ambassadors but also from civil society, from experts and from people who can inform our work from a variety of different directions. If you add up three ambassadors, two ministers, plus the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and other civil society groups and experts, I don't know how we would end up at less than four or five meetings anyway.

We're happy to work with colleagues on refining the language of this motion, but the fundamental point is that we need to have enough meetings, summer or not, to deal with this critical issue. It might be our summer break, but there's no summer break for Ukrainians. There's no time off for people who are seeing their homes destroyed and who are seeing schools and hospitals targeted.

This is a devastating war that we're seeing with the targeting of civilians and children. There is a total lack of regard for human life, for international law and for the rules of war that we're seeing from the Russian Federation.

Canada needs to do its part. I believe that means opposing the logic of appeasement or compromise with this violent aggressor.

My view, when I saw this announcement from the government, was that the government's decision to suspend their own sanctions is a slap in the face to the Ukrainian people in their darkest hour. It made me wonder what the point of sanctions is if the government is so casually willing to ignore or suspend their own rules every time somebody asks.

This is happening in a context where, and it's important to note, the German Chancellor told Bloomberg, "It would be good if they would be there, even though they are not necessary." The German Chancellor has said that the return of the turbines is not necessary.

It's important that we be firm in our resolve. If we aren't, then Russia will simply continue to escalate their pressure.

I note as well that during his comments, the parliamentary secretary claimed that the return of these turbines will ensure European energy security. Nothing could be further from the truth. Returning turbines will not guarantee European energy security. It will only empower the Kremlin to control the energy supply to intimidate Europe further and to cut off energy supply at a time and in a way of their choosing.

I hope that through these hearings and through the deliberations that the committee will undertake we will be able to make the case to the government of the need to be resolute in standing with our Ukrainian allies and not to show weakness in the way they have done by proposing to return these turbines to suspend the sanction regime that they have trumpeted in the past

Again, we need to be standing with our Ukrainian friends and allies during their darkest hour, summer or not. That means taking the time to have the hearings that are required to get to the bottom of these issues and to hold the government accountable.

I'm certainly prepared to do that, and I hope that other members are as well.

• (1025)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Genuis.

We'll now go to Mr. McKay.

Mr. McKay, welcome to the committee. The floor is yours.

Hon. John McKay: Thank you, Chair.

Personally, I prefer to arrive at my conclusions after I've heard the evidence. I can't imagine that this is a simple or easy decision. As chair of the defence committee, I think there are significant NATO implications in the decision-making process. If we are establishing a witness list, I would like to hear from our NATO ambassador.

I think it's rather unprecedented that some of the most significant members of NATO have come out and supported the decision. Everyone would agree it was a very difficult decision by the Government of Canada to return the turbines.

I think that would be useful to the committee, so all the evidence could be on the table.

I don't have any firm views other than a general support of the notion of the amendments. I think they're helpful. I much prefer a committee that works constructively in the best interest of Canadians. I think the motions put forward by Mr. Oliphant, along with the main motion from Ms. McPherson, are actually strong steps in the right direction. I support Mr. Genus's argument that we can certainly deal with these kinds of things in the summertime because this is an important issue.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McKay.

We next go to Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I believe we need to keep this rather open-ended because, as we dive into this, it is another opportunity for Parliament to raise public awareness over the war in Ukraine. I think we need to have a briefing on the current situation in Ukraine to make sure we understand the ramifications of this rather embarrassing decision that the government made in returning the gas turbines to Gazprom.

When you look at what happened yesterday with an attack on civilians in downtown Vinnytsia, where 23 more people were killed including three or four children in that cruise missile attack, we need to have some understanding around how gas sales to Germany and other European nations fuel Putin's war machine. We need to understand that those revenues generated by Gazprom ultimately go back to the Russian military, which buys things like cruise missiles and other artillery, as well as the overall illegal invasion in Ukraine by the Russian Federation.

We want to make sure that we cover all these bases. I don't believe that restricting timelines, restricting the number of meetings or restricting the witness list through a motion is in our best interests or in the interest of Canada's foreign policy in Ukraine...allowing the Government of Ukraine to express its concerns, as well as those of the diaspora here in Canada.

We've all seen the response from President Zelenskyy on this decision. To say that he's disappointed is an understatement. I think there's anger. I think Ukraine feels betrayed, regardless of the sanctions Mr. Oliphant talked about and the unprecedented number of people and organizations they've been placed on. If we're going to suspend those sanctions on a temporary basis, then they mean nothing.

Mr. Chair, I'd encourage all committee members to look at the bigger picture and ensure that we get everyone out there—experts in the field—to give us full briefings, so we can make proper decisions, and so that Canadians who have taken an interest in this, as well as the media, will be able to report on those facts.

• (1030)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bezan.

Next we go to Mr. Bergeron.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll simply start by saying that this was an untenable situation, impossible. It was very difficult for the Canadian government, which was between a rock and a hard place, having to make an impossible choice. Obviously, this is a very sensitive issue.

If there's anyone who's delighted by all this, it's Vladimir Putin, in the Kremlin. These turbines were a way for him to drive a wedge in the NATO alliance, to create a rift between allies and to arouse dissension, when the alliance has shown unwavering unity on the matter thus far. Playing into the hands of Vladimir Putin is what outrages me the most.

The Ukrainians have said over and over again that energy can be supplied to Europe via the pipeline on their territory. That is why they can't understand the decision to allow the return of the turbine. Actually, it's not just one turbine; it's at least six turbines over a two-year period. For a temporary sanctions exemption, two years is a pretty long time, in my view.

We know that Russia is quite capable of supplying energy to Germany and the other European countries without necessarily needing these turbines. What, then, is the reason for all this?

To constantly have to kowtow to the Kremlin on the issue of will Russia supply Europe with oil and gas or not. On the face of it, returning these turbines isn't going to keep Vladimir Putin from turning off the taps according to his mood that day.

The alliance's solidarity is a high price to pay just to end up at the mercy of Vladimir Putin, in any case. I think we definitely need to understand what's going on.

As I said at the outset, I readily acknowledge that this isn't an easy situation for the Government of Canada; it must have been a tough decision to make. Far be it from me to lay blame or heap criticism on—

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Chong: It doesn't really matter if this amendment is in front of us—

• (1035)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: What are you saying?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Chong: I'm sorry. I'm not on mute.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: No problem.

As I was saying, far be it from me to heap criticism on the government, but we do need to understand the reasons why it made this tough decision. Germany won't be any less vulnerable to the Kremlin's whims because of this decision, meaning that Germany's long-term energy supply won't be any more secure.

Now, to satisfy Mr. Chong, I'll turn to the specific matter of the amendments. Since we have to go through each of the proposed amendments and since Ms. McPherson said that she supported the first amendment, I'm inclined to accept Mr. Oliphant's amendment. I nevertheless appreciate Mr. Chong's reservations, and if it's okay with Ms. McPherson, I propose a subamendment to Mr. Oliphant's long amendment.

My subamendment is as follows:

That the amendment be amended by replacing the words "that this study consist of no fewer than five meetings" with the following "that the committee determine the number of meetings required to carry out this study".

That's all, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bergeron.

Next we'll go to Mr. Oliphant.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I also want to thank Mr. Bergeron.

I think Mr. Bergeron appreciates the diplomatic considerations involved in the decision-making process.

This was a very hard decision for the government given both sides of the argument.

[*English*]

In saying that, I just want to clarify your subamendment. I heard two things. I heard that we would determine how many meetings we'd have later, but I also heard six meetings. That was in the interpretation.

Mr. Chair, perhaps we could have a bit of liberty in the general rules of order to allow Mr. Bergeron to clarify the subamendment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: What I said was six turbines, not six meetings. I proposed "that the committee determine the number of meetings required to carry out this study".

[*English*]

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Thank you. I think we lost that in interpretation, so thank you.

I think we're agreed with that. I would be okay to amend that, even to Monsieur Bergeron's.... Rather than striking the phrase, we could accept that subamendment that indeed the committee will determine—I think it needs to say "at a later date"—the full number of meetings. We would have that first meeting, or it could even be two meetings. I think the clerk and the chair will decide, with that number of witnesses, how many meetings we will need to accomplish that. I just wanted to leave it open. I thought five was arbitrary and may not be necessary. If necessary, we'll have five meetings.

We're not against more meetings on this; I just didn't want to restrict that. We would be supportive of that subamendment to give the committee the opportunity to add as many meetings as we need after we have those first one or two meetings to get the witnesses done.

The second thing is that, with respect to Mr. Bezan's comments, yes, we need to continually keep Ukraine on the agenda. I do need to remind him he was not at the committee meetings that we had. We underwent several months of a filibuster by his colleagues from the Conservative opposition party during our attempt to study Ukraine. We endured endless hours of filibustering by his colleagues as we tried to deal with Ukraine. That just needs to be stated in this meeting. Ukraine is top of mind with our committee members, but we were stuck in endless conversation from members who refused to talk about women's reproductive rights at a future meeting after we finished the study on Ukraine.

I forget how many meetings it was we lost, but it was a dozen or 15 meetings, something like that, due to the Conservative filibuster, when we wanted to talk about Ukraine and we wanted to finish CO-VAX and our vaccine equity study. It's very important to say there is no hesitation whatsoever from the government side to keep Ukraine at the top level.

Despite the rhetoric coming from the Conservatives, I would also remind them that out of 200 countries in the world, Canada is ranked as number five or six in our support for Ukraine, and that does not go unnoticed. I was just at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Lugano, Switzerland. Canada was recognized by Ukrainian ministers, by Ukrainian civil society, by the prime minister, by the president regularly as one of the top contributors humanitarian-wise, military-wise, financial guarantee-wise. Our convening of power where we are bringing together countries from around the world regularly with our leadership was recognized.

This decision with respect to the turbine is nothing compared to what we have been doing and will continue to do for Ukraine. So, the rhetoric that comes from opposition members is simply not true and it's not fair. Canada stands with Ukraine and will always stand with Ukraine. We are recognized by the world as doing this.

I think Monsieur Bergeron had an extremely important point with respect to allowing this issue to cause a rift in the alliance. We have had, as NATO allies, plus others who are not in NATO, a unified approach to Ukraine that has been spectacular. We can't allow Mr. Putin to use this as a divisive thing. What we need to do is stay together as an alliance. That's why we added hearing from the German and EU ambassadors. We think it's extremely important that we continue to keep that alliance absolutely firm, absolutely true to what we need to be doing. Any kind of rhetoric that comes from some members that attempts to divide us as nations is simply irresponsible and inappropriate.

Thank you very much, Mr. Bergeron, for pointing that out. I think it was an extremely important point. We will navigate this very difficult moment. No one chose to have turbines sent to Canada to be refurbished on a regular maintenance schedule. That is a reality.

• (1040)

We are trying to find the best way possible to do two things: to ensure that our allies and partners have the energy they need and to ensure that Ukraine has the tools it needs to defend itself against the illegal invasion.

In closing, I did not get a subamendment from either Mr. Chong or Mr. Genuis, who were suggesting changes to what I had proposed. There is a subamendment on the floor now, which I think is very acceptable, that says we would not have an arbitrary number of four or five meetings. We would allow the committee chair, with the clerk's help, to strike the number of meetings. We need to get that first list done.

I agree as well with Mr. Bezan that we can keep a list open. I have no trouble with having more witnesses, but I want to be careful in our choice of witnesses to make sure that we hear appropriate and important information for the committee to understand this decision and its ramifications.

We think the Ukrainian Canadian Congress is the most important civil society group to hear from. If there are others, yes, that's fine. We think the ministers are important to hear from. We think the ambassadors from Ukraine, Germany and the EU are also important to hear from.

After we've heard from those initial witnesses, if we want to have more witnesses, we're very open to that. If we think there are gaps in our knowledge and our understanding, we're very open to hearing from more. We're just trying to be responsible with our time and also with our witnesses' time.

With that, I will close by saying that yes, we're in favour of Mr. Bergeron's subamendment to the amendment. It seems to me there may be general agreement that we take out the deadline of July 22, in the second part of my amendment and just say "as soon as possible".

We're open to having more witnesses. There may be a way to subamend that one, very similar to Mr. Bergeron's comments about allowing the committee to have more meetings, to allow the committee to ask for more witnesses once we've heard from some.

It's difficult to be painted into a corner by those in opposition who want to somehow say the government is not open to a discussion on this. We're very open to a discussion on this. We're just trying to find the best way to have a discussion that keeps our lines together, that promotes the well-being of Ukraine in its fight for its life and that is responsive to Canadians' concerns, particularly the diaspora here. That's what we're about today and we'd like to try to keep that focus.

• (1045)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Oliphant.

As everyone is aware, four amendments are being discussed by members. Is it the wish of the committee to take up the first amendment, which relates to the number of meetings we'll have? Given the interventions of Mr. Oliphant and Mr. Bergeron, there appears to be some consensus there. Is it the will of the committee to deal with and vote on the first amendment?

An hon. member: Yes.

The Chair: Is there unanimous consent for that?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, we're on the subamendment to the first amendment. Is that correct?

The Chair: Yes, that's correct. It is the subamendment.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Okay. That's where we are, so there's no way around that.

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Chair, there's been quite a lot going on, so can you tell me exactly what we're voting on?

The Chair: Yes, absolutely.

Madam Clerk, would you read out the subamendment to the amendment, for the benefit of all the members, please.

The Clerk: Yes.

This is a subamendment by Monsieur Bergeron. It is to strike, after the semicolon, "that this study consists of no fewer than 5 meetings", and replace it with "determine the number of meetings required to carry out this study".

The Chair: Would members like to put this to a recorded division?

An hon. member: Yes.

The Chair: Okay.

(Subamendment agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

(Amendment as amended agreed to)

The Chair: Should it be the will of the members—obviously we will hear from all of you—I would ask that, to the extent possible, you keep your comments restricted to the second amendment that was introduced by Mr. Oliphant. It has to do with the issue as to whether we have July 22nd, as in Ms. McPherson's motion.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Chair, I'm sorry to interrupt, but could we not just see if there's agreement on that? Do we need to have a discussion on that?

The Chair: Is there anyone who would like to speak to that or would we want to go to a vote on that as well?

[*Translation*]

The Clerk: Mr. Bergeron would like to comment.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: I want to comment on Mr. Oliphant's motion, and I'd like to hear Ms. McPherson's thoughts because I can't recall her comments on this matter specifically.

I want to remind everyone of what happened to me, personally. As you may recall, back in January, I proposed that the committee request that Canada's ambassador to the United Nations appear. The committee agreed to do so as soon as possible, but here we are in July, and we have yet to hear from the ambassador to the United Nations.

All that to say, I'm a bit leery about the expression "as soon as possible", because it doesn't always mean the meeting will be held soon. Would it be possible to say something a bit more specific than "as soon as possible"?

Given past experience, I get a bit worried when we talk about asking ministers to appear "as soon as possible".

• (1050)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bergeron.

Mr. Oliphant, the floor is yours.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: It's sort of a comment but sort of a point of order, and I may be asking the clerk for help on this.

It would seem to me that this is a convention that we follow with ministers of the Crown, that committees request them to come as soon as possible and that she will schedule them.

All I can state from the government side is the complete willingness of the ministers to appear as soon as possible. There is no hesitation coming from either the Minister of Natural Resources or the Minister of Foreign Affairs whatsoever, but I just wanted the clerk to say whether there's other wording that has been used. My worry is that today is the 15th, and the 22nd is seven days away, and both ministers usually have international travel on their agendas. I am worried that it will look like we're not meeting a deadline if that deadline is put in. It seems to me that most committees use the convention of "as soon as possible", but the clerk could perhaps advise us on that.

The Chair: Could we hear from the clerk on that specific issue as to what the convention is?

The Clerk: There's not a specific convention. I've seen it both ways. We could put the date and then say "based on availability", if that's the understanding and the will of the committee. We could add that. It's as you wish, but I've seen both conventions where we do a hard date, and obviously sometimes that's impossible, and I've seen it as well as just generally "as soon as possible".

Hon. Robert Oliphant: If I could speak out of turn, I would say we would be happy if we had the date and "based on availability". I just want to give human beings some chance to have some flexibility. We don't have any trouble with the date. We just need to know that there's availability that needs to be scheduled, so if that was agreeable to Mr. Bergeron, we could keep the date and add "based on the ministers' availability".

We may find consensus on that.

The Chair: Now we'll go to Ms. McPherson.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Chair, I agree with what the clerk has suggested. The only thing I would add is something that indicates the urgency of this issue. The decision was made without con-

sultation with other parliamentarians, with other parties. Obviously, the government did not feel they wanted to share this information with other parties. To bring this committee together to have this study was something that was done with the opposition parties, not with the government. For me, my worry is that, despite Mr. Oliphant's assertion that they would be made available, there is a very urgent situation at stake.

I also agree with Mr. Oliphant that we have wasted an enormous amount of time in this committee and have not been able to study Ukraine over the last several months because of the filibuster by the Conservatives. I do think this is an urgent issue. The reason we're meeting during the summer break, the reason we're doing this is that it is so urgent. Perhaps, in a spirit of being accommodating and also recognizing the urgency of this particular issue, we could just put down the date with availability.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. McPherson.

I think there is consensus that the date remain, but that it be subject to the consideration that they would be available.

Is there a consensus amongst all members to—

Hon. Robert Oliphant: I would also add "noting the urgency of the situation". That would absolutely be appropriate as well. The three things are the date, the availability and noting the urgency of the situation.

I'm sorry for speaking out of turn.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Oliphant.

It seems like those are eminently reasonable. I think there is agreement among all the members on those three specifications.

Did we want to put that to a vote? Is it the will of the committee that we have a recorded division?

(Amendment as amended agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Thank you very much. That's the second issue we've dealt with. Thank you for the spirit of compromise amongst all the members.

Now, in the main, could we keep our comments reserved to the third issue, which is the witnesses we should be hearing from? There have been some suggestions of additions of individuals and stakeholders we should hear from, but if anyone would like to speak to that, please keep it limited to that specific issue.

Next up we have Mr. Chong.

• (1055)

Hon. Michael Chong: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to amend Mr. Oliphant's amendment. He suggested the addition of two witnesses: the ambassador of Germany to Canada and the ambassador of the European Union to Canada. I would like to amend that to add more witnesses.

I'd like to hear from the Deputy Prime Minister. I find it odd that this announcement was made by the Minister of Natural Resources. Under his department, the permitting is not a responsibility. It is really a responsibility of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and, frankly, it rises to the level of the Prime Minister. Knowing that it's very difficult to get a Canadian prime minister to appear in front of a committee, I will settle for the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

It's really important that Minister Freeland appear in front of our committee to explain this decision. This rises to that level because President Zelenskyy himself, as a head of government, issued a very strongly worded condemnation of this decision. This is not at the level of a minister-to-minister issue. This rises to the level of a deputy prime minister. We would really like to hear from Minister Freeland on this issue, so we would like to have her as a witness.

In addition, we would like to invite the Ukrainian foreign minister to appear. Recognizing that President Zelenskyy may not be available to appear, we would like to request and invite the Ukrainian foreign minister, whose government has been so affected by this decision, to appear. If that foreign minister is not available, then obviously we are more than happy to hear from Ukraine's ambassador to Canada. That's the second witness we'd like to invite to our committee.

Third, we would like to hear from the Ukrainian World Congress. This is particularly important, in addition to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, because the Ukrainian World Congress has filed an application with the Federal Court arguing that this decision may not be legal or it may be inconsistent with Canadian law. We would like to hear from them as to exactly why they believe this decision is not consistent with Canadian law, so the Ukrainian World Congress is a third witness we would like to hear from.

Finally, we'd like to hear from other witnesses, such as foreign policy experts who have spent their lifetimes studying the geopolitical dynamics of that part of the world and particularly how natural gas politics has an impact on that part of the world. This is not simply a decision about one, two or half a dozen gas turbines. This is a decision that is about where Germany and Europe are going to get their natural gas in the coming months and years.

Germany is constructing two new liquefied natural gas terminals off their northern coast in the Baltic Sea. When Russia attacked Ukraine on February 24, Germany quickly made a decision to approve and expedite the construction of two new LNG terminals in the Baltic Sea off the German coast. The German economic minister has said publicly in recent weeks that Germany expects those turbines to be operational early in 2023. Germany, within the space of 12 months, has been able to construct two new LNG facilities in order to import natural gas to replace Russian natural gas. They have been in discussions with governments around the world, pleading with them to provide those additional supplies.

We know they have been in discussions with the Norwegians as well as the Qataris. We need to understand where the Canadian government has been in those discussions because this is a critical piece of the puzzle. It's not simply about saying that the government should not have granted the export permits for turbines to

Germany. It's also the corollary of that discussion: If Germany is not going to get its gas from Russia, where is it going to get its gas?

• (1100)

Surely Canada, as the world's fifth largest natural gas producer, is part of this solution. We need to hear from experts who can talk about the issue of Canada's providing natural gas for Germany. It's particularly appropriate in the lead-up to Chancellor Scholz's visit in the next month to Canada where, as I understand it from reading public reports, officials are saying the number one issue will be if Canada can provide more natural gas to Germany in order to get Germany weaned off Russian natural gas.

We need to hear from a group of witnesses, people like Marcus Kolga, who has written about this recently, Balkan Devlen and Thierry Bros, who is a professor of political science at Sciences Po in Paris, who have spent a lifetime studying this issue, not only of gas issues—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Bergeron.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: A little while ago, Mr. Chong gave me a friendly reminder about sticking to the amendment.

Now, I'd like to do the same for him. I get the sense that he is jumping ahead to the next amendment, the one about the witness list. It sounds as though he is giving us his list of proposed witnesses when we haven't even agreed on the deadline for submitting our witness lists.

Through you, Mr. Chair, I would ask Mr. Chong to stick to the amendment before us.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bergeron.

Now we go back to Mr. Chong.

Hon. Michael Chong: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Bergeron.

Now I will read my subamendment.

[*English*]

That the amendment be amended by adding after the words "the Ambassador of Germany to Canada and the Ambassador of the European Union to Canada" the following: "That other witnesses be invited, including the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, the Ukrainian foreign minister, the Ukrainian World Congress, Balkan Devlen, Thierry Bros, and Marcus Kolga".

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chong, for your subamendment.

Now we go to Mr. Oliphant.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Chair, I'm in that moment where I'm agreeing with everything that Mr. Bergeron says, so I'm trying to sit on the edge of my seat to hear what he says next.

I didn't raise a point of order, but had a concern for two reasons. One, we weren't on the topic of the motion. There's also what I would call "scope creep"—I don't know how we would translate that—about this motion.

I think this motion is about a decision the government made with respect to a permit to allow turbines to be sent, after refurbishing, to Germany. That is our topic. We have had an opposition day already on the topics that Mr. Chong is raising. The House has spoken on it. I would leave that for a later study. I would like us to be fairly focused on this set of meetings with respect to this critical decision the government made. I think the committee has the right to give advice to the government on it and to opine on it.

I have some concerns about the subamendment. The first would be with respect to the Deputy Prime Minister. There's no more effective and better spokesperson for Canada with respect to Ukraine than our Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. There's no doubt about that. However, this was not her decision. The decision that was made...the permit is signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the negotiation was done under the responsibility of the Minister of Natural Resources.

While it's always wonderful to listen to Minister Freeland, I don't think that's relevant to the question at stake here. Again, I think the opposition would be unwise to unleash her to speak on this issue. I think she's passionate and informed and a world expert on it; however, I don't think her contribution on this particular issue is appropriate or timely. I think we want the other two ministers.

Also, I think it would slow down the process. Trying to find one minister's availability is always tough. Two is tougher and three is worse. I would suggest that is not appropriate.

I think we rarely would ever call a foreign minister from another country. We have an ambassador, and that's what an ambassador's job is. I would keep it to the ambassador of Ukraine to Canada as the most appropriate spokesperson for Ukraine at this forum. So, I would not agree with that.

I have a concern. I have great respect for the Ukrainian World Congress, but Mr. Chong raises the issue of their going before a court. As soon as we get into an issue that is before a court, as with one of the protagonists in that court action, it changes the nature of what ministers are able to contribute at this committee. I think we're on very thin ice, because that opens the door to ministers simply not being able to comment because it is *sub judice*, before the courts. I think it's not wise for us to invite someone who has brought an action to the Federal Court on this. I think that would actually thwart the committee's ability to hear from the ministers the way I think we want to hear from them.

I would say that's unwise, so I would not be voting for this subamendment for those reasons. I think the Deputy Prime Minister is not the appropriate person on this issue. It's the two ministers named, and they're easier to get than getting three. They signed the permit and they gave the advice to the government on the issue. It is not appropriate to bring the Deputy Prime Minister, nor the for-

eign minister from Ukraine. We have the ambassador listed. That is the spokesperson for that country in this country.

While I have great respect for Marcus Kolga, and I don't know the other two people the member mentioned, I would say again I would hold this until we get to the fourth item, and look at other witnesses once we have the key witnesses done, to find out what to do. Marcus Kolga does some great work on Russian disinformation. I don't know of him as an expert on natural gas and the topics that Mr. Chong has raised.

• (1105)

I would like us to do some thinking about future witnesses, but hear from the key witnesses we've named and added to the list, and try to contain the study and not get into a study about pipelines going across Canada or LNG capacity in Canada to feed Europe. We had a whole day on that with an opposition motion in the House. I think that was fine. We can look later at Europe's need to change its dependency on energy sources from Russia. They're well aware of it; believe me. I don't think it is necessarily our job to preach to other countries about something they're already well aware of, which is being held hostage by Russia on energy. We also know it takes time for them to do that. I would speak against that subamendment.

There may be other possibilities to change it, but I think right now all we need to do is add the ambassadors from Germany and the EU, and then a later amendment could look at additional witnesses as required.

• (1110)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Oliphant.

I should chime in and say one thing to the members, given that Mr. Oliphant has spoken to the substance of the individuals that Mr. Chong has proposed.

It is highly unlikely, as all members are fully aware, that we need to provide a specific list of individuals to be invited. The reason I say that is we all will have the opportunity to actually submit the names of witnesses at a later date. From a procedural standpoint, I would just ask that all members bear that in mind as well.

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Chair, on that point of order, I spoke about specific witnesses as part of this subamendment in front of the committee precisely because the fourth amendment would strike the last phrase in the motion and preclude members of the committee from submitting additional witnesses.

I wanted to make sure that, as part of the discussion on this third amendment and our subamendment currently in front of the committee, we got the witnesses who we would like to invite in the third amendment. The fourth amendment, if it's adopted, precludes members of this committee from submitting additional witnesses.

That's the whole reason I've been proposing this subamendment, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to clarify that and whether that's the case or not.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, I do believe that part will come into the fourth amendment and we will be open to some change in wording on that, but it's not on the third amendment. It would be on the fourth, I would argue.

Hon. Michael Chong: Yes, I agree.

Anyway, I just wanted to explain why we are being explicit about the kinds of witnesses—the individuals and organizations—that we want to invite as part of this third amendment and subamendment, because if the fourth amendment is adopted, it precludes us from adding to that list.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chong, for that clarification.

Now we go to Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair, I'm speaking in favour of the subamendment by my colleague Mr. Chong, and I'll reply to and rebut some of the comments that were just made.

When it comes to the Ukrainian World Congress having to file an application to a Canadian court, I think this is something we need to look at. First of all, the convention of *sub judice* is not in play because they haven't been accepted yet as an intervenor, as their application hasn't been at all, at this point in time, accepted by the courts. We need to keep an open mind here. We should hear from them as to what motivated them and why they would have to take this step to try to take the Government of Canada to court over a very embarrassing decision.

Second, Marcus Kolga is a subject matter expert on all things Russia, and I really do believe that he and others from the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, and other academic voices, need to be heard. We should be putting them on our witness list.

I would also say that we have to look at how Russia has weaponized energy. This is, again, to Mr. Chong's comments. We need to have those experts and the people involved in this speak to how this is impacting Europe, how it will ultimately be used against Ukraine and how Canada has a bigger role to play in offsetting the overall impact of Russian energy on the European Union and other allies.

Let's make sure we keep an open mind here. Let's make sure we have all those experts come before us, as well as the other organizations and stakeholders that have something to say. One of the organizations I want to add as a witness down the road is the League of Ukrainian Canadians. They were the first ones to come out and denounce the government's decision to return the gas turbines to Gazprom. Let's make sure they're available.

I'll also say this. Minister Freeland is by and large the expert on Ukrainian issues within the Liberal caucus and at the cabinet table, and it almost sounds like Mr. Oliphant doesn't want her to appear

because maybe she's not in favour of what both Minister Joly and Minister Wilkinson did in making this announcement. We should, in my opinion, have her appear before committee to voice either her support or her displeasure for the decisions that were made.

When we're inviting representatives of the government, we should always go to the highest ranking officer possible. In Canada, in this case, we're asking for the Deputy Prime Minister, and we'd like to hear from the foreign minister of Ukraine, Dmytro Kuleba, who is definitely the person we should have at committee before the ambassador. If he's not available, then yes, let's have the ambassador, but we should be hearing specifically from Ukraine's foreign minister about the concerns of the government in Ukraine.

President Zelenskyy was unreserved in his criticisms of the Government of Canada on this decision, and I think it is in the interests of our foreign affairs committee, in the interests of our Parliament and in the interests of Canadians that we hear from all those witnesses, as well as the highest ranking government officials we can get, both in Canada and in Ukraine.

• (1115)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bezan.

We'll now go to Mr. Genuis.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Chair, I am speaking in support of my colleague's amendment as well.

With respect to Minister Freeland's appearance, let's make note of the elephant in the room here. Minister Freeland has been the most visible and most vocal in terms of the government's approach to Ukraine and she has been completely silent and invisible with respect to the government's decision around these turbines.

Minister Wilkinson, who is not the minister of foreign affairs and who's not responsible for issuing these permits, has been made the designated fall guy for this bad decision. Minister Freeland is in hiding.

If the government is willing to defend this decision and if the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada is fine with this decision and thinks this decision is consistent with the values she's articulated in the past, then she should come before this committee as the government's prime spokesperson on their approach to Ukraine. She should come before this committee and defend that decision.

She is the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada. This issue has been addressed by the Prime Minister of Ukraine and by the Prime Minister of Canada. It is totally appropriate for her to come. In terms of this canard about it being really complicated for scheduling to get three ministers, there's no date attached to Minister Freeland. The amendment asking Minister Freeland to come is part of the second section of the motion, which does not have a specific timeline or date attached to it. While I think we want to hear from the Minister of Foreign Affairs in particular within the tighter prescribed timeline, Minister Freeland can take her time and reflect on what she does or doesn't want to say on this.

It is ridiculous that the government says the Deputy Prime Minister is passionate and is the expert on this subject, but then somehow she isn't the appropriate person to speak to this absolutely critical issue in terms of Canada's support, or lack thereof, for Ukraine during their critical time of need.

On the question about Ukraine's foreign minister coming before this committee, nobody is proposing summoning or requiring a minister of another country or even an ambassador to come before the committee. It's simply a question of an invitation. As far as an invitation is concerned, I suspect that, given how critically important this issue is for the Ukrainian government, given that President Zelenskyy has addressed this issue directly and given that a Canadian diplomat has been summoned in connection with this issue, this is a high priority issue. I suspect it will be a priority for the foreign minister to appear and the foreign minister would welcome the invitation.

Nobody is going to think any less of the foreign minister or Ukrainian government officials if the circumstances in which they receive the invitation are such that they're simply not able to respond to it. Of course we would be understanding of that, but absolutely let's issue the invitation and extend the offer. I think it makes eminent sense.

Why is this such an important issue for Ukraine? They've articulated it clearly. We know, and the German chancellor has said, that these turbines are not necessary for European energy security and that they won't guarantee European energy security going forward. This is part of the Kremlin's game to expose their ability to weaken sanctions at will. We have to stand against that. We have to say that we will not grant exceptions to sanctions and we will defend our sanctions regime. We have to take that strong and principled position or else the Kremlin will continue to look for opportunities to whittle away at that sanctions regime and render it meaningless.

It's an important enough issue that we should ask the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada to appear and we should invite Ukraine's foreign minister to appear. We've shown in these discussions a willingness to try to work collaboratively around aspects of this motion, but the direction the government is trying to take us in with these amendments is clear. It's fewer witnesses and fewer hearings. It's not extending invitations to certain key, high-profile people.

• (1120)

I'm strongly in support of my colleague's subamendment, which I think establishes firmly the importance of this issue and establishes that we do not just want to hold hearings, but we want to hold the

kind of substantive, detailed hearings with high-profile people such that we can get to the bottom of this issue.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Genuis.

We now go to Mr. Oliphant.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Chair, I will simply reiterate that I will be opposed to this subamendment for the reasons given. I also think there are aspersions being cast and veiled comments that I think are inappropriate for parliamentarians to be casting around about ministers of the Crown. I hope every member of Parliament is aware, and some—at least one—in this room will be more aware than others that when you disagree with a cabinet or government decision, you resign from cabinet.

We have a principle on cabinet solidarity in this country that Minister Freeland adheres to. The reality is it is simply inappropriate to go on a fishing expedition as such. I think everyone in this room knows that Minister Freeland is the Minister of Finance and also the Deputy Prime Minister. She has a keen interest in the Ukraine issue and the war and is a passionate supporter of Canada's engagement on this, and this sort of questioning or wonderings are just inappropriate.

I will continue to say that the position we would have is to bring to committee the ministers who have the responsibility for the decision that was made. It's been very clear that the permit was signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and that the engagement with respect to the refurbishment of the turbine was part of the mandate of the Minister of Natural Resources. Clearly, those two ministers are the ministers responsible. That is about government accountability.

That is why I'd like to suggest that we bring this to a vote fairly soon so that we are able to make sure we have the appropriate meeting with the appropriate people at the appropriate time. This does not preclude adding witnesses. What we've done is add some key witnesses to the list who we think are important to get the basis of this done. Once we've added, we'll go back to the amendment after the subamendment is dealt with.

Once we have done those initial meetings with the ambassadors, the ministers and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, we can reassess the need for more witnesses. It would be absolutely appropriate, and we should do that. I think it would be very good.

The Minister of Finance has work to do, and all of us are concerned about the work that she is doing. It's important and big work for Canadians. We should let her do that work, which is what we will continue to do.

I'm speaking against it partly on the principle of making ministers who have made the decision accountable, and we will continue to do that.

I'm trying to remember if there are any other points I was trying to make. At a certain age, you need to write notes, and I wasn't writing notes.

Again, I would stress that when we get to the fourth part of the amendment I made, we can add a list of other witnesses to be determined by the committee, very similar to what Mr. Bergeron suggested with respect to additional meetings. We're not closing any doors; we're keeping doors open and trying to make them appropriate.

• (1125)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Oliphant.

Is there anyone else who would like to speak to Mr. Chong's subamendment?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Chair, I had my hand up.

The Chair: My apologies, I did not see that.

Ms. McPherson, the floor is yours.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you.

As we go back and forth on whether or not it's appropriate to list all our witnesses and which witnesses should be included, wouldn't it make sense to submit a list of additional witnesses by July 19 or set a date?

The initial motion that I put forward gave us the opportunity to put witnesses forward. We've now talked about taking it out. We've talked about putting more witnesses on the list and a whole bunch of other things. What we could do is say to submit names of additional witnesses by July 19, 2022. Then we could all submit our lists and go from there.

I'm not 100% sure why that wouldn't meet the needs of all members of the committee.

The Chair: That's fair enough, Ms. McPherson. I think it's one of the unintended consequences of the manner in which amendments were introduced.

Mr. Chong, the floor is yours.

Hon. Michael Chong: If that's where the committee is going, Mr. Chair, I agree with what Madam McPherson has proposed.

That can only happen, though, if the fourth amendment is defeated and we can submit our witnesses directly to the clerk, as other members of the committee can as well. That's the reason I introduced this subamendment. Simply, I was worried that we would not be able to submit additional witnesses.

I agree with what Madam McPherson has proposed and I hope that is what the committee does.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chong.

We now go to Mr. Oliphant.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Chair, I think we'll be able to agree when we get to the fourth one. I think we can negotiate a date. We've already sort of said "as soon as possible", and the first one will be open to more witnesses. Our general thought is more witnesses after we've heard what we need, but we're very open to that.

I would think we could go to the subamendment on the third amendment and get that done. Then maybe we could vote on the third amendment, and then we can address the fourth one. We're open to Ms. McPherson's suggestion that we can have more witnesses, but we just want to get the wording of that correct.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

On that comment by Mr. Oliphant, would he [*Inaudible—Editor*] withdraw his fourth amendment so we could then have a proper discussion around the ending of the motion after this subamendment is voted on?

Hon. Robert Oliphant: If I could just jump in to speak to that point of order, I would like a little discussion on that fourth amendment. I worry that the date may be too early if availability of ministers is pushed ahead. All of those things.... I don't like that date. I just think we could have some discussion. We're fine with more witnesses, but I'd like to get this one done first.

You have my word that we will get to that fourth amendment and find a way that we can all agree to having more witnesses on a date that's acceptable to everybody.

I won't withdraw it yet, but we can subamend it.

• (1130)

The Chair: Would anyone else like to speak to this? No.

Is it the wish of the members to actually put number three to a vote?

Hon. Michael Chong: There's no need to do it, Mr. Chair. I think it's clear that the subamendment is going to be defeated.

The Chair: Do you withdraw your subamendment?

Hon. Michael Chong: I'm not withdrawing it. I'm assuming Madam McPherson is going to vote against it, so—

Hon. Robert Oliphant: I would like to have a vote on it.

Hon. Michael Chong: Okay, that's fine by me.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Can we get the wording, Mr. Chong?

Hon. Michael Chong: Yes.

Before I read my subamendment, your amendment called for the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the ambassador of Ukraine to Canada. Mr. Oliphant has proposed an amendment that adds "the ambassador of Germany to Canada and the ambassador of the European Union to Canada".

I'm proposing that we add that other witnesses be invited, including the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, the Ukrainian foreign minister, the Ukrainian World Congress, Balkan Devlen, Thierry Bros and Marcus Kolga.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chong.

Now could we go to a vote on this?

(Subamendment negatived: nays 7; yeas 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

Hon. Robert Oliphant: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, I'm not sure in hindsight, and the clerk can correct me if I'm wrong, whether we actually voted on the first two parts of the amendment. I think we've reached consensus on them now as they stand.

The Chair: No.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: We haven't. Okay. Do we now vote on the third amendment, which adds the ambassadors?

Okay.

Then we'll get to the fourth amendment, and I'll be very willing to entertain a subamendment to that as the mover of it.

The Chair: For sure.

We'll now revert to Mr. Oliphant's third amendment. However, for the benefit of committee members, I will ask the clerk to read out to all members the third amendment.

The Clerk: The third amendment was the addition of the ambassador of Germany to Canada and the ambassador of the European Union to Canada.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now, if members agree, we'll put that to a vote as well.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Chair, can I ask a quick question?

The Chair: Yes, of course, Ms. McPherson.

Ms. Heather McPherson: I'm sorry, but this has all become a bit convoluted, so I'm trying to make sure that it's clear in my mind. I'm tired this morning, apparently.

This would add those two ambassadors to our list, but we would still maintain that committee members submit lists of additional witnesses by July 19 so that we have the opportunity to submit the Deputy Prime Minister and all the other names at that point. Is that correct?

• (1135)

The Chair: Yes, you are correct, Ms. McPherson.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: On a point of order, there is an amendment to strike that, but I'm willing to entertain a change to the amendment I made. We will still get to the point where we get to set a date for more witnesses.

The Chair: Absolutely.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: We'll get there, Heather.

The Chair: We're getting there. We're making great progress, thanks to everyone.

I should say, as we've been advised, that in terms of committee resources, this committee can only meet until 12 o'clock. If all members could bear that in mind as well, that would be hugely helpful.

Let's go to a vote on Mr. Oliphant's third amendment.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Now we will go to Mr. Oliphant's fourth amendment. I thought I saw Mr. Genuis's hand up but maybe I was mistaken.

We will now go to Mr. Oliphant.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: It's an understandable mistake, Mr. Chair, given how often my hand is up.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Oliphant, the floor is yours.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: As I said, I am willing to entertain a subamendment to this. I can't make it myself because I made the amendment, but I think we are open to more witnesses. The thing is—maybe it's my personal thing; I don't know whether it's the party thing—I'd like to hear what we're going to hear from that cadre of witnesses, which probably will take the two meetings that we have right now, and then I'd like to make sure that we.... It can be an ongoing list. I don't want to close the list of witnesses either to the one we decided on today nor even to one maybe on July 19. I think it may be premature to close the list of witnesses.

We want to very clearly indicate that the committee may call more witnesses as required or wanted. If we want a date on it, I can live with July 19, but I just think we want to make sure that we hear from the government, the ambassadors and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and then decide. We may decide that we have enough information, or we may decide that we want to do a different study after this.

There's been enough concern about the sanctions Ms. McPherson has raised that we may want to have a set of meetings on the effectiveness of sanctions in general. We may have to do a legislative or statutory review of the sanctioned regimes. We may want to have hearings about oil and gas dependency and the kinds of things that Mr. Chong has raised. We might want to do all of that. I'm not presupposing we don't want to do that, but let's hear about this. Let's deal with the issue of the permit that was issued to allow a refurbished turbine to return to Germany and get that out there.

At the end of that, I think we'll know more. That's what hearings are for. Then we'll make a decision on that. If you want it on July 19, I can live with it, but I just think it's premature because we just don't know what we want to do yet.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Oliphant.

Next we go to Mr. Chong.

Hon. Michael Chong: Before I make my intervention, Mr. Chair, on a point of order, what is the amendment in front of us?

The Chair: We'll go to the clerk on the specific wording of the amendment.

We're discussing that at this point. Mr. Oliphant is considering the possibility of a subamendment but, of course, technically speaking—

Hon. Michael Chong: Well, I don't, Mr. Chair, I don't—

The Chair: —he cannot offer that himself.

You just want the wording—

Hon. Michael Chong: That's fine. What is the amendment?

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Chair, I can respond to the point of order, not speaking out of turn, that the amendment is to strike that last clause, after the last semicolon, “that committee members submit lists of additional witnesses by July 19th, 2022”.

I would be proposing, if someone was willing to move a motion, that the committee entertain receiving lists of future additional witnesses at a later point. All I would suggest is that we don't tie it down. We're absolutely willing to have future witnesses, additional witnesses. We just think that it may be premature to say July 19.

• (1140)

Hon. Michael Chong: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, on that point of order.

I support neither the amendment nor a potential subamendment along the lines of what Mr. Oliphant has suggested.

I would support voting down this amendment completely and then going back and proposing another amendment, if this amendment is voted down, that would keep Madam McPherson's original wording with maybe a change of the date to July 26, which would give members an additional week to submit witnesses.

That's what I believe we should do here as a committee. We should vote down both the amendments, because all members of this committee should be able to send witnesses to the clerk and to you, Mr. Chair, through the clerk, for consideration for this hearing. That's what we discussed. That's what Madam McPherson has suggested. We were discussing—

Hon. Robert Oliphant: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, to negate that phrase does not take away the power of the committee to do that.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: That's not a point of order.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Well, it is—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: It's a point of debate, Mr. Oliphant.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: It is a point of order with respect to the standing orders of a committee. With respect to the standing orders of the committee—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: No, it's not.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Well, the chair will decide that, thank you.

Just because you take that phrase out does not say we can't. I'm not making a motion to say we can't have future witnesses. That's not in the motion. It's just taking out that phrase. Under the standing orders of the committee, we are allowed to have witnesses any day we want. That's absolutely possible for a committee to do. I'm not saying we can't do it. I'm just saying we're not going to do it at this point. I just want to clarify that.

Mr. James Bezan: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Bezan.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Chair, I would ask for your ruling on this, because I do agree with Mr. Chong that these are two substantive changes. Mr. Oliphant is trying to strike a portion of the motion and to amend it [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] is counterproductive. I believe it would be considered a substantive change, which would make it out of order in what Mr. Oliphant is trying to do in his amendment.

My advice as a former chair would be that you would have to either withdraw Mr. Oliphant's amendment or vote on it and defeat it, so that then a proper change can be made to the motion as to a timeline, rather than the concept of being able to bring in additional witnesses.

If we support the amendment by Mr. Oliphant, then you have made the decision not to call additional witnesses, and any motions coming forward in this committee meeting would be ruled out of order, because you just took a decision not to call additional witnesses.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: On that point of order, Mr. Chair, if I have unanimous consent, I am happy to withdraw that amendment, which would be the appropriate order to do things. I would be happy to entertain any other amendments that someone wanted to make with respect to the motion.

I will withdraw that, and let's now actually deal with that phrase to see if we can improve it—

Hon. Michael Chong: Sure.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: —and reach consensus on it.

If I have unanimous consent, I'll withdraw it.

The Chair: Do we have unanimous consent to withdraw Mr. Oliphant's fourth amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Amendment withdrawn)

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Chair, I have an amendment that I think everybody will agree to, I hope.

The Chair: Mr. Chong, you are up next, so the floor is yours.

Hon. Michael Chong: Thank you.

I propose that we simply strike the final four words of the motion. That's my amendment. We strike the words “by July 19, 2022”.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Chong.

Did you want to speak to that issue, Ms. McPherson?

• (1145)

Ms. Heather McPherson: No, I did not. That was one of the comments I was going to make. Why don't we just make this simple?

I am a bit concerned, because we have 15 minutes left and I would hate for us to not resolve this before the end of today's meeting. To expedite our decision-making, I am fully in support of Mr. Chong's amendment.

The Chair: If members agree, we will put Mr. Chong's amendment to a vote.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Chair, I ask that you call the vote on the motion as amended.

The Chair: That makes eminent sense.

Perhaps members can vote on the motion proposed by Ms. McPherson as amended.

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I think that completes everything that we met to discuss. There are no other issues to discuss, unless members have anything else they would like to bring up. No? Okay.

Thank you very much to each and every one of you. It's good to see there was a lot of compromise and lots of good votes here, and that we managed to get it done before 12 o'clock, when the time for our meeting is up.

This meeting stands—

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Chair, I have a quick question.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Chong.

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Chair, what's your thinking around these meetings? Is it to have a panel in the morning, or a two-hour meeting in the morning and a two-hour meeting in the afternoon in one day? Are you planning on doing one meeting a day? It depends on witnesses and when they're available, but what's your thinking on this?

Also, what is the availability of House administration resources to do all of this in the next week and in the coming weeks?

The Chair: I can't speak to House resources as of yet. I don't believe it's going to pose a challenge.

Of course, there is the issue of the availability of witnesses, which is certainly beyond our control. However, I would like to hear from members as to what their preferences would be from a

procedural standpoint so we can proceed in a manner that is agreeable to most members.

Did anyone want to speak to that issue and what their preference is?

Go ahead, Mr. Bergeron.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: My only preference, Mr. Chair, is that we discuss it in advance, to make sure everyone is available since it is the summer. It would be an awful shame to have to miss one of the meetings because I was away.

I simply ask for your understanding and consideration, Mr. Chair. Before you schedule a meeting, I would appreciate it if we could try to come to some agreement on which times work best.

• (1150)

[*English*]

The Chair: Absolutely. We will certainly endeavour to do so.

Go ahead, Ms. McPherson.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Chair, I just want to add to what Mr. Bergeron said. This is urgent and speed is required here. I recognize that we all have other things on our agendas and schedules, but this is a very urgent issue. That's why we're having this emergency meeting. I would like us to reflect that in the timing of our hearings.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. McPherson. The spirit of this being an emergency meeting is very well understood, I believe, by all members.

Next is Mr. Oliphant.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: I am once again in agreement with Monsieur Bergeron. I think it would be helpful for the clerk and the chair, as much as possible, to survey members of the committee to make sure we have as many members as possible available. However, I also agree with Ms. McPherson in that we recognize the urgency of this.

We leave it to the chair and the clerk to do their best at scheduling a herd of cats. Good luck.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Oliphant. We'll definitely check in with the clerk and the House insofar as resources are concerned.

In the event that any members are unavailable for a particular stretch of time, I would be grateful if they would kindly email me that information. Again, we will endeavour to the best of our ability to schedule this in a manner that works for all members.

On that particular note, unless there's anything else anyone would like to say, this meeting stands adjourned. Thank you, everyone.

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