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# Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

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Chair: Mr. Ali Ehsassi





# Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

• (1710)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.)):** I call the meeting to order.

Welcome, colleagues, to meeting number 28 of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

Today's meeting is being held in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order adopted on Thursday, June 23. Members will be present in the room or on the Zoom app. The proceedings will be published on the House of Commons website. For your information, the camera will always show the person speaking rather than the entire committee.

As always, interpretation is available by clicking on the globe icon at the bottom of your screen. Moreover, when speaking, please speak slowly and clearly. When you are not speaking, allow me to remind you to put your mike on mute.

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

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Wednesday, September 21, the committee commences its study of the security at the borders between Azerbaijan and Armenia, an issue that I know is of interest to all members here.

Mr. Bergeron.

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ):** On a point of order, Mr. Chair.

As the witnesses will soon be online, I just want to make sure that the sound tests have been done and that they were successful.

[English]

**The Chair:** Yes, they have done a sound check, so we're all good to go, and everyone seems to be ready.

Again, we're delving into a study that is of interest to all the members, and indeed, I would say, to many Canadians around the country.

It is my pleasure, of course, to welcome officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development.

We have with us here today two witnesses: Mr. Andrew Turner, who is the director of the eastern Europe and Eurasia division, and

Ms. Alison Grant, executive director, security and defence relations.

Before we ask the witnesses to provide us with their testimonies, as a preliminary matter, given all the discussions we had Monday, it was my understanding that there is a consensus that the schedule be changed somewhat. You will all have received the new schedule that was put together by the clerk and the analysts. Is there consensus that, insofar as the month of October is concerned—

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.):** On a point of order, when did we get a new schedule?

**The Chair:** Oh, my impression was....

My apologies. That was my bad.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Chair, maybe I could clarify.

I think there is a consensus among all members of the four recognized parties here on this committee to agree to the calendar as presented until the end of October, as you gave it to us at the last meeting, and we would then have a subsequent discussion about what would happen after the end of October. I believe there is a consensus on the committee to do that. We thought if there was, then we might as well seize it so we could plan out the schedule until the end of October. I believe that is the consensus of all the members of the committee.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for that.

I take it, then, that there is full consensus that insofar as October is concerned, we go with the schedule as agreed to by the members.

Welcome, Mr. Turner and Ms. Grant. You each have five minutes for your testimony, after which we will invite the members to ask you questions.

Mr. Turner, the floor is yours. You have five minutes.

**Mr. Andrew Turner (Director, Eastern Europe and Eurasia Division, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As my public service career began with my being a parliamentary page—in my case, in the Senate—I always like to begin by commending Parliament for the opportunities that program offers to Canadian students.

Mr. Chair, on September 13, renewed clashes broke out between the armed forces of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Each side blamed the other for the hostilities, and immediate high-level international engagement contributed to a ceasefire that came into effect on the evening of September 14. Since then, the situation has remained tense but stable.

[*Translation*]

Over 200 people, mainly soldiers, from both sides were reportedly killed in the clashes, 135 Armenian personnel and 77 from Azerbaijan. Both sides also reported civilian casualties and several injuries. The recent hostilities were unprecedented in terms of intensity and represented the most serious escalation since the end of the second Nagorno-Karabakh war in 2020.

• (1715)

[*English*]

Border clashes have occurred periodically since the November 2020 ceasefire. However, the recent escalation was different, as there were credible reports of Azerbaijani strikes inside Armenia, well beyond the border.

Azerbaijan justified its shelling as a response to Armenian provocations, including the alleged laying of Armenian-produced land mines in Azerbaijani territory. There has been speculation that Azerbaijan was taking advantage of a distracted Russia and west to push Armenia towards a political settlement on their terms.

As seen with previous border clashes, mutual accusations obscure our visibility. It is difficult to discern clear facts, as there is no international presence in the border areas.

Armenia has publicly voiced concerns that Azerbaijan appeared to be planning another operation and has called for the continued engagement of the international community, including from Canada.

Immediate and high-level reaction of the international community was critical in calming the situation. These efforts included calls for immediate de-escalation and the need to frame a path forward between the two parties.

The leadership of the United States and France undertook direct active engagement with the parties. European Council President Charles Michel and EU High Representative Josep Borrell conducted calls with the leaders of the region, and EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus Toivo Klaar travelled to the capitals of both countries.

[*Translation*]

At Armenia's request, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) undertook an assessment mission to Armenia, which started last week. In multilateral forums, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the OSCE, held a special meeting of the Permanent Council on September 13. The UN Security Council held two meetings on the situation on September 14 and September 15.

[*English*]

The OSCE has for years tried to manage this conflict, but the work of the Minsk Group, co-chaired by France, the United States and Russia, has increasingly been sidelined.

The EU has been playing an increasingly active role that has gained some traction. Under EU mediation, the two Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders agreed to start drafting the bilateral peace agreement and set up a joint commission on demarcating their common border. These efforts have been continuing, with further meetings planned for this fall. It remains to be seen how recent events will impact this process.

[*Translation*]

Canada immediately reacted to the escalation in hostilities by expressing its deep concerns and by calling for calm through social media, on September 13, urging de-escalation, respect for the ceasefire, and a return to dialogue. Minister Joly spoke to her counterparts from both countries. She held a call with Armenian Minister Ararat Mirzoyan on September 15, and a call with Azerbaijani Minister Jeyhun Bayramov on September 17.

[*English*]

In her conversations, Minister Joly expressed condolences for the loss of life, welcomed the ceasefire, urged further de-escalation and continued respect for the ceasefire, and stressed the importance of meaningful dialogue.

She underlined that the reports of Azerbaijani strikes in Armenian territory were especially worrying—in particular, damage to infrastructure and civilian casualties—reiterating the importance of territorial integrity and the unacceptable use of force. She stressed that there is no military solution to this conflict.

Canada remains ready to support measures to stabilize the situation and to encourage negotiations for a comprehensive peace treaty. We welcome the ongoing engagement of the OSCE, the EU's important work to further dialogue and bilateral engagement by our partners such as the U.S.

We continue to monitor the situation and to engage directly with the parties, encouraging them to continue working together, with international support, to build mutual confidence at this sensitive time.

Canada enjoys positive bilateral relations with both countries. Thousands of Canadians trace their heritage to Azerbaijan and Armenia and serve as important links between our societies.

Canada-Azerbaijan relations are reinforced by our mutual commitment to shared global priorities, including environmental stewardship, and Canada appreciates Azerbaijan's co-operation in Afghanistan and its delivery of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine.

Canada supports Armenia's social and democratic reforms through initiatives such as the mission of Special Envoy Stéphane Dion and the Arnold Chan initiative for democracy and supports the Armenian parliament. We look forward to opening an embassy in Yerevan.

For these reasons, Canada encourages both Armenia and Azerbaijan to engage in meaningful dialogue towards a comprehensive and sustainable peace, which will provide a better future for all citizens.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Turner.

I understand that Ms. Grant would not like to make remarks but has kindly made herself available to answer any questions the members may have.

We'll go directly to questions. The first round is for six minutes, and we commence with Mr. Chong.

• (1720)

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

I'm wondering if the Canadian government has made an explicit call to Azerbaijan to immediately cease hostilities at the border and beyond as a result of their recent provocations.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** Minister Joly has called for the immediate end of all hostilities in full respect of the ceasefire.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** In other words, the government hasn't explicitly called out Azerbaijan in that regard. It seems to me to be somewhat offside with some of our closest allies. I note that Secretary of State Antony Blinken called upon the Azerbaijani president to immediately cease hostilities against Armenia. France likewise called on Azerbaijan to immediately cease hostilities and also called for an emergency session of the UN Security Council, which subsequently took place on September 15. I'm wondering why the Canadian government is not explicitly calling out Azerbaijan because of this recent increase in conflict at and beyond the border.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** Minister Joly has explicitly called out the Azerbaijani shelling of Armenian territory and explicitly raised this concern with her Azerbaijani counterpart.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Thank you for that.

Has the Government of Canada changed its travel advisory to Armenia as a result of these recent hostilities?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** We have taken note of the recent hostilities, but our long-standing travel advice is that Canadians should avoid travel to the border regions and Nagorno-Karabakh.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Thank you for that.

Did any of the weaponry used in these strikes involve drones?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** I'll defer to Alison on that question.

**Ms. Alison Grant (Executive Director, Security and Defence Relations, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** It's very hard for us to verify in the border areas exactly what military equipment was used. I note that Armenia has accused Azerbaijan of using combat drones, artillery and large-calibre firearms. That's from Armenia. I've seen open-source reporting along those lines as well.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Has the government had any change in position on the export permits that were granted to WESCAM with respect to the export of Canadian camera technology for the Baykar drones to Turkey?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** No. The policy that was put in place has not changed. Any group 2 military export permits requested by Turkey would not be issued.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Can you tell us a little bit more about when the government's embassy in Armenia will be open?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** We are currently going through the processes to implement the decision to open the embassy. Minister Joly has made it crystal clear that the embassy is to be open as soon as possible.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Okay.

I know that in recent years Canadian delegations have gone to Armenia. Recently the U.S. sent a congressional delegation to Armenia, led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi. I'm wondering if the Canadian government has any plans to send a delegation to Armenia.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** We have regular visits from our embassy in Moscow, which is accredited to Armenia. At the moment, I'm not aware of any other plans that are scheduled, but certainly as COVID lifts, it becomes easier to travel. We just hosted a visit of the Armenian deputy foreign minister to initiate bilateral consultations. Given that we hosted the first round, the expectation would be that we would travel to Yerevan for the next round.

• (1725)

**Hon. Michael Chong:** There's a last question I have.

I know that Ursula von der Leyen recently visited Baku and Azerbaijan this past summer. She visited with the specific intention of talking about energy security, seeing that Azerbaijan is a significant oil and gas producer in eastern Europe and in the Caucasus.

I know that the current government, the Trudeau government, struck a working group with the European Commission, with Ursula von der Leyen—I believe in March of this year—between Canada and the European Commission, or European Union, and that was to focus exclusively on how Europe and Canada could work more closely together on natural gas exports.

Can you tell us if there have been any discussions that have taken place about the interplay between energy coming from Azerbaijan for Europe, as opposed to Canada, and how that working group relates to the work that you are doing in Global Affairs on the Armenia-Azerbaijan file?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** I can say that Azerbaijan's role as an energy supplier is particularly important in offsetting some of the disruptions caused by Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine, but I am not involved in the detailed working group discussions, so I don't have any further information in terms of the detailed talks.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** You're over.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** I'm over? Okay.

Well, thank you very much. I appreciate those answers.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Chong. We now go to Dr. Fry.

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

Thanks for the update.

As you well know, talks under the Minsk process have been going on with regard to Azerbaijan and Armenia. However, as we well know, when the 2020 agreement was broken, Russia played a huge role in that. Given that Russia has a defence agreement with Armenia and given that Azerbaijan and Turkey have been closely aligned—and we know the long-standing geopolitical history between Turkey and Armenia—should either of those two groups be involved in this kind of negotiation? That's my first question. Should we not just go back to the OSCE Minsk process and get this done by three so-called neutral groups, like France, the United States and the United Kingdom? Should that be what we're talking about?

I ask because this was a very short-lived 2020 ceasefire, and the 2,000 troops that Russia was going to be putting in there to make sure that peace was being kept and that the corridors were kept open actually didn't work, because Russia is now totally distracted by their war in Ukraine. What do you see as a process to move this agenda forward? There has to be some way.

I know that the European Council and the European Commission have been involved, but in theory, this has always been under the OSCE agreements and process. What do you see as the best way to talk about a ceasefire, to deal with looking at a process and to deal with looking at certain agreements, given the history with Russia and Armenia, the history with Turkey and Azerbaijan and the failed 2020 agreement?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** Certainly the fact that the invasion of Ukraine has put the three Minsk Group co-chairs on different sides has greatly complicated the work of the OSCE Minsk Group.

What I'll do is turn to my colleague Alison, who deals directly with the OSCE, to answer in more detail.

**Ms. Alison Grant:** Thank you.

Mr. Chair, certainly the OSCE has been the pre-eminent regional security organization managing this conflict for decades, or trying to manage it. It is, however, quite sidelined at the moment. We will always support the OSCE and we will continue to advocate for a role, but it is sidelined due to current realities.

Azerbaijan really rejects much engagement from the OSCE at this point; they believe that they haven't helped solve the conflict in the last 30 years. That's their position. Also, Russia has not been engaging constructively as a Minsk Group co-chair since their invasion of Ukraine in February.

There are, however, a number of other mediation tracks by our partners. The EU is quite involved. They had a surge in mediation efforts last April where they brought leaders together, and foreign ministers also agreed on setting up a border demarcation commission. That progress has now been stalled with the current hostilities, but we hope we can get back there, so we certainly support the EU's work, as well as the OSCE's, in trying to solve the conflict.

We also have partners, such as the United States and France, that are actively trying to mediate and meeting all parties involved.

● (1730)

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Can I ask if too many cooks are spoiling the broth? If too many people are talking to try to negotiate something, shouldn't there be one negotiating process that is supported by everybody?

My other question is with regard to Turkey and Turkey's role as a supporter of Azerbaijan. How is that playing in the region?

**Ms. Alison Grant:** I'll answer the question, Mr. Chair, on the parties and turn it over to my colleague, Mr. Turner, on the role of Turkey.

I think that indeed there are a number of different mediation tracks on the go, but as the United Nations representative mentioned last week, they support all the various mediation tracks going on. We hope for success. Sometimes it's helpful to have a couple of different channels. There are a number of countries involved. Despite the difficulties we have with Russia and the tensions and their lack of constructive engagement, they are very obviously a major power in the region. As well, they signed the trilateral agreement that ended the 2020 war, which is being implemented now, so it would be difficult to move forward without their involvement in some way.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Are they deploying the 2,000 troops they said they would to keep peace? Have they been deployed?

**Ms. Alison Grant:** Yes, they have, after the end of the 2020 war.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Yes, but are they still there or have they been redeployed to the Russian war with Ukraine?

**Ms. Alison Grant:** Mr. Chair, the Russian so-called peacekeepers are still located in Azerbaijan. I have seen some open-source reports of redeployments out. I wouldn't be surprised if there have been some levels of redeployment, but the peacekeepers are still stationed in Azerbaijan.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Thank you.

Do I have time, Mr. Chair, to get an answer from Mr. Turner with regard to Turkey?

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds, Dr. Fry.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Mr. Turner, would you comment?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** While we obviously have concerns with Turkey's role in the provision of the drones, in all of our discussions with Turkey, they have emphasized that they are working to encourage Azerbaijan and Armenia to resolve differences through dialogue. We are also encouraging them to continue the progress we have seen with regard to normalization talks between Armenia and Turkey.

Turkey's overall role continues to be that of a strong NATO ally playing a vital role and helping manage the response to the Ukrainian crisis, including a key role in negotiating the grain initiative. We continue to work very closely with Turkey as a NATO ally and partner.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Thank you.

I will just quickly note that there are a lot of conflicts of interest going on. The European Commission is mostly interested in—

**The Chair:** Dr. Fry, you're way over. My apologies.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Thank you, but there is a lot of conflict going on in terms of conflict of interest. I just wanted to note that.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bergeron, you have six minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank the witnesses for their participation.

I confess that I had hoped to see you in person, now that the COVID-19 restrictions are behind us. However, it is your privilege to appear virtually. Having said that, I must admit I was a little disturbed to see you in that reddish-light environment, Mr. Turner, which gives the impression that you're in the room of a warship or a submarine from which operations are being conducted. Perhaps that gives us some context at the moment.

Be that as it may, the April 2022 special report entitled "Supporting Armenian Democracy" prepared by Stéphane Dion, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy to the European Union and Europe, states: "At present, Armenia is the archetype of a democracy under intense pressure, which is striving to improve itself and, therefore, deserves Canada's full support." Indeed, there is a provision in this report that emphasizes the importance of supporting Armenia, a fledgling democracy, which needs the support of a country like Canada.

Other than the opening of an embassy in Yerevan, which I will come back to if I have some time, what measures is Canada putting forward to support Armenia?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** I apologize for the lack of lighting. I'm trying to take advantage of the natural sunlight, but it's a bit cloudy, so I'm more in the shade today.

As I said, as a former page, I intend to return to Parliament in person.

With regard to our support for Armenia, several measures have been put forward. You have already mentioned the most important one, in my view, which is the announcement of the forthcoming opening of the embassy, which we are working hard to make happen as soon as possible.

In addition, we have already started the bilateral consultations, which were recommended by the special envoy, Mr. Stéphane Dion. Just a few weeks ago, the Armenian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs was here in Ottawa to begin these consultations. We are considering new initiatives.

Also, we already have programs in place, including the Arnold Chan Initiative for Democracy, which supports civil society organi-

zations and continues to grow in value. This year we are supporting five projects, with a total budget of just over \$200,000.

We are also working to support the Armenian Parliament, in conjunction with the Parliamentary Centre here in Canada. We continue to have discussions, as I said, to find other ways to assist Armenia, including our support for programs to resolve the landmine conflict.

• (1735)

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Freedom House considers Azerbaijan, which has been ruled by the same president since 2003, to be in the grip of an authoritarian regime. Without wishing to generalize, Armenia seems to be surrounded by more or less democratic regimes and is under pressure from a country that is clearly not. How can Armenia be helped to cope with these pressures?

Before you answer this question, I would like you to consider the following. During the 2020 conflict, when you spoke to the committee about the situation, you said that you were not in a position to know what was happening on the ground, whereas we have seen that the minister at the time was clearly more aware than you were willing to acknowledge.

In addition, you came back to us today saying at the beginning of your appearance that you don't really know who started the hostilities, which makes it all the more urgent to open the embassy in Yerevan. However, given the speed with which, after raising the flag, we finally opened the embassy in Kyiv, you will allow me to be a little worried.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** I can assure you that opening the embassy as soon as possible is a priority and we are putting all our efforts into achieving this. This is a priority directive directly from Minister Joly.

Even with an embassy in Yerevan, as is the case with our allies who are already there, there are still limits to what you can see of the situation on the borders which are in a safe zone. We no longer have the presence of the OSCE mission, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which was there before, to give more independent reports.

It is important to have an embassy, it would give us more contacts. However, even the embassies that are there at the moment have difficulty knowing what is happening directly in the conflict zone.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** I am willing to acknowledge what you are telling us, but Mr. Chong was pointing out a few moments ago that some of our allies seem to have much more up-to-date information than we seem to have in order to determine who launched these new hostilities, not only on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, but also on the sovereign territory of Armenia, I might add.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** For us, too, it is very clear that the attacks and assaults on the territory of Armenia are a new and very worrying development. It is for this reason that Minister Joly has expressly spoken on this point in her public comments and in her discussions with her counterparts in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

• (1740)

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Thank you very much.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you. We now go to Mr. Cannings.

Mr. Cannings, welcome to the committee. You have six minutes, sir.

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Thank you. It's an honour to be here.

This is obviously such a complex situation. It was complex before the last hostilities broke out. It's been going on for years, and here we have conflict as peace negotiations are going on. As I understand it, we have a conflict that's happening within the wider concerns of the conflict that Russia has brought upon Ukraine, a conflict that other powers, such as Turkey, are involved in.

What I'm trying to understand from the Canadian perspective is what an at least acceptable and perhaps ideal peace agreement would look like from a Canadian perspective or from the perspectives of both Armenia and Azerbaijan. What are they looking for and what do you think would be acceptable to them, and what are the prospects of, hopefully, coming up with a peaceful agreement without further conflict?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** From Canada's perspective, the ideal agreement would be one that satisfies both Armenia and Azerbaijan. They are the two parties involved. They are the ones who need to sit down and come to an agreement, so the international community, through whatever mechanism—the OSCE Minsk Group, the efforts of the EU, or something through the UN—or whatever channel, including with Canada, would be there to support and create the conditions that would allow that bilateral discussion to take place.

The specifics would be up to the two countries to decide. Obviously it's a very difficult issue. It has been going on for decades, as you say, but what we have grounds for optimism on is that both countries, both governments, have explicitly stated that they are interested in resolving it, given that one impact of the conflict has been to change some of the dynamics that had been frozen. In many ways Nagorno-Karabakh was almost the stereotypical example of a frozen conflict. While there is still much work to be done, the two sides are actively discussing the parameters for a permanent settlement.

Again, there is always a risk of these flare-ups and these tensions, and that's why I think it's important for Canada and for all of our allies to continue to reinforce to both sides the need to avoid violence, to keep de-escalating so that there is time for that peace agreement to be reached.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** Considering that one of the main concerns in this latest conflict is the fact that Azerbaijan was attacking Armenian territory, are there any immediate and perhaps intermediate timeline concerns about certain vulnerable populations? Are there certain ethnic groups within that area that might be targeted, or women and children? What are the real concerns there?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** I think the overall concern is simply the risk of further violence, which could have tragic consequences for all of the groups you have mentioned. Even if the conflict were lim-

ited to purely military targets, that in and of itself would be tragic, but the risk of damaging civilians of whatever background is something we want to try to see avoided if at all possible. That's why we continue to emphasize the importance of moving forward with dialogue efforts.

One very specific thing that is one of the causes of these flare-ups is the uncertain situation of the border. One of the causes for optimism in recent months has been that the two countries have sat down on several occasions to have discussions about clear border demarcation, because that has the potential to make the resolution over the longer term much more positive, as well as limit the risks of any disagreements or confusion over the situation, as it currently stands, spilling over into conflict.

• (1745)

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** Mr. Chair, do I have any time left?

**The Chair:** You have one minute and 15 seconds.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** There's one question I have that is kind of peripheral to this, but I'm interested. We're talking about Azerbaijan and its energy exports to compensate for the loss of Russian natural gas. On what routes does that take place? This is a landscape that's quite fraught with difficulties of many sorts. I'm just wondering what route those energy exports would travel and if there's any issue around this conflict that might be a hazard to them.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** Azerbaijan has quite extensive energy reserves and transports them in a variety of means, so the impact of conflict specifically in Nagorno-Karabakh would be more limited. The risks to broader energy disruption come much more for the broader regional tensions, including most obviously the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but again, Azerbaijan uses pipelines, ship transportation.... There are various mechanisms that it uses.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** I'll end my questions there. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll now go to the second round. Mr. Genuis, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses.

I want to just put a really fine point on this. Mr. Chong raised these issues.

Is there a difference between Canada's position and, say, the U.S. position with respect to this latest round of conflict? Does Canada agree with all of the statements the U.S. has made, or does Canada have a different position than the U.S. on this conflict?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** Canada is fully aligned with the U.S. and is like-minded in terms of the statements that have been made as to the importance of resolving the conflict, avoiding—

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** I'm sorry. I want to sharpen this, though, because, respectfully, it sounds like you're choosing your words carefully but not necessarily directly answering my question.



My question isn't about general alignment. Does Canada agree with all the statements that the U.S. has made with respect to this or does Canada have a different position than the U.S. or disagree with some of the statements the U.S. has made?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** Canada does not disagree with any of the statements that the U.S. administration has made. Again, no. The short answer is yes, we would agree with the U.S. position.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Perfect. That's a good answer. Thank you.

Is the same true in terms of the French position?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** For all of the statements I have seen, yes, I would say we're fully aligned with the French position.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Thank you.

The U.S., France and the U.K. have all expressed the view that Azerbaijani aggression was the cause of this current round of conflict, and they have called on the Azerbaijani army to return to their initial position. Based on your original answer, I'm assuming that position is Canada's position as well. Is that correct?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** I don't know that we have explicitly referred to troop movements; however, we have consistently referenced the importance of respecting the ceasefire agreement, which had the troop positions spelled out. While I don't believe we've made any explicit statement, by our support of the ceasefire agreement, then yes, that would be the case.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** I'm aware that Canada hasn't made an explicit statement on this, but I guess what I'm trying to clarify is that even though Canada hasn't made an explicit statement, does Canada agree with the statements that have been made by our allies saying, first, that Azerbaijani aggression was the cause of the current round—the Azerbaijani side crossing out of those positions marked in the ceasefire agreement—and, second, that the Azeri side should return to those specific positions?

I gather that the answer is yes, but I just want to confirm again that Canada's position is to agree with those statements that have been made by our allies.

• (1750)

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** We certainly would agree with the importance of troops returning to the positions.

On the first point, just given the uncertainty of what specific trigger this round of conflict....

We have expressed our concern about the Azerbaijani shelling of Armenian territory, particularly the civilian areas beyond it, so that is something that Azerbaijan has done that we have expressed concern about. In terms of the question of what happened that triggered this and where the provocation came from, given we don't have visibility on the specifics in that area, it's not something that we have made any.... We are not in a position to be able to assess that.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** You would acknowledge that the Canadian position, at least with respect to who is responsible for triggering the current round of conflict, is different from the U.S. and the French position. The U.S. and the French are saying this was triggered by the Azeri side, and the Canadian position seems to be "We don't know."

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** In terms of the specifics of who shot first, we are not in a position to make a clear determination. However, we are clearly concerned by the fact that Azerbaijan launched attacks into Armenian territory.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Is it fair to say you that would typically believe the U.S. and the French assessment is correct, or do you have any reason to doubt their assessment?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** No, we do not have any reason to doubt the assessment of our allies.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Okay.

Is that my time, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Genuis.

Now we go to Mr. Zuberi. You have five minutes.

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to the witnesses for being here.

I'd like to start off with a question about Armenia and its relationship with Russia.

Armenia hosts a Russian base and is also part of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which is basically a pact that's similar to NATO. It's among Russia, Armenia and other countries, and it says that when one of them is attacked, it's as if all of them are attacked.

Can you talk about the way in which Russia is or isn't committed to Armenia's sovereignty vis-à-vis the military base and this pact?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** The Collective Security Treaty Organization is a military alliance of which Armenia is a part, along with Russia. Russia has long maintained a military presence in Armenia. We now have the peacekeeping mission in Nagorno-Karabakh as a result of the 2020 ceasefire.

In response to the latest outbreak of fighting, Armenia requested support from the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and they have sent out a mission looking into the situation. This is certainly an indication of Russia's continued efforts to play a leading role throughout the region. However, we've seen that Armenia has in recent years taken very significant steps to reform, to promote democracy and to develop its own policies, which we are seeing in important areas, including Armenia's consistent refusal to endorse several of Russia's positions with regard to Ukraine.

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi:** Thank you.

Shifting gears for a moment to Turkish troops, have there been any Turkish troops deployed as peacekeepers in addition to the 2,000 Russian troops that are presently there, from what I understand? If so, where are they located vis-à-vis the Russian troops?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** My colleague is better placed to discuss the specifics, although I believe she is currently having some technical issues.

What I would say is that yes, as part of the agreement, Turkey has deployed a small number of troops. They're not a part of the peacekeeping mission, but they are more a part of a central operations centre that can help observe the operation as a whole. It is not a peacekeeping mission in the same way that the Russian one is, and it's on a much smaller scale.

• (1755)

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi:** With respect to the trilateral ceasefire in the region that was signed in 2020 between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia, was there any mention of Azerbaijani access to the exclave that is part of Azerbaijan? Was there any mention of that?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** Yes. One of the provisions is to ensure access, just as there was likewise a set schedule for the transfer of some territory. This is one of the issues that continues to be discussed between the two parties and that needs to be resolved before there is a final and permanent resolution to the conflict. This is one of the areas that continues to be under discussion at present.

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi:** There is some access from Turkey to the Nakhchivan exclave of Azerbaijan. Can you talk a bit about the importance of that access or the significance of it? How does that play into the region and in what's happening right now?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** I don't think the Turkish access is significant in terms of the discussions around the corridor and linking it to the rest of Azerbaijan. The discussions between Armenia and Azerbaijan are much more focused.

I would say what it is more significant for is an indication that because of the geography of the south Caucasus region and the complicated relationships between the different countries involved, it is one of the examples of how reaching a permanent peace agreement, as well as the normalization between Turkey and Armenia, would stand to benefit the region greatly by allowing for much greater regional economic integration than is currently possible because of the political situation.

I think I would look at it more in that context, but that specifically has not been as much of a focus as the issue of getting Nakhchivan access to the main part of Azerbaijan.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Turner.

We'll go back to you, Mr. Bergeron. You have two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The academic Thomas de Waal wrote in a Carnegie Europe article that Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev was using a strategy of coercive diplomacy against Armenia, a mixture of negotiation and force.

What is your reaction to this statement about President Aliyev's approach to Armenia?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** In all of our bilateral discussions with countries, particularly Azerbaijan, we make it very clear that Canada wants to see diplomatic resolutions. The country's representatives tell us that this is their desire as well, and we continue to see a great deal of effort on their part to engage in diplomacy. As for the examples of rhetoric and negative pressure from Azerbaijan,

which are numerous, this is always a concern and we always indicate that it is not helpful. This is one of the reasons why we continue to make our position clear and to monitor the situation very closely to avoid a return to conflict.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Assuming that it was Azerbaijan, as the Americans and the French claim, that launched this latest assault, which was aimed at Armenian territory, this time, does that fit your definition of the alleged willingness of both countries to reach a diplomatic solution?

Doesn't this, on the contrary, support Professor Thomas de Waal's definition of Azerbaijan's attitude towards Armenia?

• (1800)

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** This is another indication of the difficulties caused by the confusion and vagueness surrounding this situation, when the two countries do not agree on the demarcation of the border region. This leads to situations where one thinks the other is launching an assault when it is not. That is why we continue to emphasize at every opportunity the importance of resuming diplomatic exchanges to resolve the problem. That is also why, as the minister said, this attack, this time targeting the territory of Armenia, was particularly worrying.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

It's also good to see Ms. Grant back. We're terribly sorry for the technical challenges you've been facing—

**Ms. Alison Grant:** My apologies.

**The Chair:** —but thank you for returning.

We now go to Ms. McPherson.

You have two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thought you were saying you were happy to have me back. Unfortunately, that wasn't—

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

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** I am.

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Thank you, Mr. Bergeron.

Thanks to all of you for being here and for answering our questions this evening.

One of the things I'm very interested in—and I think we are all considering what's happening in Iran at the moment and what we're seeing happening in Afghanistan and around the world—is the protection of women's rights.

Canada, of course, has a feminist international assistance policy. We are supposed to have a feminist foreign policy; we don't have that in place yet.

Can you tell me what Global Affairs Canada is doing and what we are doing as a government to ensure that the premise of the feminist foreign policy is being put in place as we deal with this conflict?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** Certainly. I can speak a bit to what we are doing in our bilateral relations with both countries and then turn to Alison for anything more, specifically through the OSCE or other angles.

With regard to Azerbaijan, we regularly engage with the government on the importance of gender equality, on promoting women's economic empowerment and, on a small scale, providing some support to civil society organizations through Canada-funded projects. For Armenia, we have the Arnold Chan initiative for democracy—which particularly, and all of the projects involved in it, is focused on women, be it either economic empowerment or political engagement. We also have broad support for the parliamentary administration and ensuring that gender equality is factored in there.

It also is a regular aspect of all of our discussions, including in the most recent bilateral consultations. I will stop there and turn to Alison for anything to add from her side.

**Ms. Alison Grant:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's simply to say, of course, that we're co-members with Armenia in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, where one of the pillars is human rights and the human dimension. We do engage quite extensively with Armenia in the OSCE on issues of human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment.

In fact, even right now the OSCE's human dimension conference is about to take place in Warsaw, where we will be engaging on these themes, and not just with Armenia, of course, but with other regional countries. We have a good partnership with Armenia in this area through the OSCE.

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Thank you.

I believe that's my time, is it not?

**The Chair:** Thank you. That's correct.

Now we go to Mr. Aboultaif. You have five minutes, sir.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

I think we're sitting in a very complicated situation. I don't know if we've ever seen in recent history one as complicated as this. For example, we have our European allies. On one side, they want the energy from Azerbaijan. On the other side, they want to protect democracy for Armenia. We see Turkey on one side. We have that security situation in Afghanistan in the whole region. We also have Iran on one side.

With this complicated situation, can you please define Canada's position in this whole conflict, other than we're calling for peace and for all sides to bring peace and to settle? I think Canada has to have a position, because our allies out there, such as the United States, have a much stronger position on this conflict, and we don't seem to be anywhere there, other than calling on everybody to maintain peace.

• (1805)

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** Well, Canada has had a long-standing position on the conflict, which is to support the UN Security Council decisions, which include mandating the OSCE to try to come up with a basis for a permanent peace agreement. In that regard, the foundation of our policy has been to support the work of the OSCE Minsk Group and its efforts, on the basis of the principles of territorial integrity, self-determination and non-use of force.

This continues to be our position. Again, it does not prejudice any of the final outcomes that are to be resolved by negotiations between the two sides. Likewise, if an avenue outside of the OSCE—the current discussions with the EU, for example—proves to be a more effective and acceptable channel to Armenia and Azerbaijan, then we certainly would support them as well. We have consistently focused on the OSCE because it has been the organization that had the mandate from the UN Security Council to lead the efforts to reach peace in this regard.

I will check quickly with Alison to see if she would have anything to add on that.

**Ms. Alison Grant:** The only thing I would add, Mr. Chair, is that what we have advocated in talking about a comprehensive and sustainable peace is a peace that really addresses the issues at the heart of the conflict. This is where you have the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, both wanting a peace agreement, but on different terms. The status and the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh is at the heart of that too. We believe that should be part of the discussions and the negotiations.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** I have two follow-up questions on the first comment.

Does that mean that Canada is sitting and waiting to see which one will prevail before we join the efforts or the direction of one side versus the other?

Second, do we support the European initiatives to maintain the security of energy supplies with the negotiations that they're trying to have with Azerbaijan?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** With regard to the first question, Canada has made it clear that we support all of the efforts to achieve peace, whether they're being led by the UN or the OSCE, so we're not giving preference to one option versus the other. We are happy to support whatever option has the most traction. In some cases, some discussions will be more effective than others in advancing certain issues in certain areas. From our perspective, the issue is not what channel is used as much as what leads to the best outcome.

With regard to Europe and energy security, we're not privy to specific details of what is being discussed, but we are, broadly speaking, in favour of increasing European energy security and reducing dependence on Russia.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Okay.

Is there anything you would like to add, Ms. Grant? No.

I have 20 seconds.

If we can name this, there is no position, really. We're sitting on the sidelines, figuring out what the efforts are going to lead to, and then we can follow suit. Is that correct?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** Canada is playing a supporting position in encouraging peace, but we are not the lead. As I said, it has been traditionally been the OSCE Minsk Group and specifically the co-chairs of France, the U.S. and Russia.

I don't agree that we have no position. Our position is very clear: We are supporting the international efforts to achieve peace in the region.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Thanks.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We go next to Ms. Bendayan. You have five minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to allow myself two comments before I ask my question.

First, I would like to add my voice to that of Mr. Bergeron. I think I also speak for the members of this committee when I say that we would love to have the experts from Global Affairs Canada come and testify in person if at all possible.

Secondly, as we have a very busy schedule, if the clerk could send us any updates on the situation over the next few weeks and months, we would appreciate it.

• (1810)

[*English*]

Mr. Turner, I would like to take a step back and ask you to please give us your opinion of how this conflict fits into a larger geopolitical context. In particular, how would you say that this impacts the importance or the strength of Russia's CSTO, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which styles itself as a bit as a counter to NATO?

Armenia is part of that group and specifically called for military assistance from the CSTO, but was rebuffed. Could you comment on what impact that might have?

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** I think the ongoing conflict and broader regional tensions—not just between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but throughout the region—are a source of concern for Canada, because we see that they benefit Russia, principally. The tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the existence of conflict at various moments in time are some of the reasons that Armenia has continued to be part of the CSTO and has relied on Russia for security guarantees.

As you say, yes, the recent response is perhaps indicative of the risks of countries doing so, but Armenia feels that it needs to be because of this conflict. As a small country facing larger neighbours, it feels at risk and needs international support. It has pursued that not just in the context of the CSTO, but also in its outreach and engagement with many other countries, including the EU, the U.S. and Canada. We are very happy to provide that support through

diplomatic channels. Again, that is one of the reasons we are very pleased to be moving forward with opening the embassy.

Efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and to facilitate greater normalization between Armenia and Azerbaijan and between Armenia and Turkey we see as a very positive step. We are doing everything we can to encourage them, because we see it as a step to reducing the risk of Russia's being able to exploit the situation for its own benefit.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Russia is effectively losing allies and losing support for the CSTO, if I understand your response correctly.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** I don't think that the limited response that the CSTO has provided to Armenia's request for assistance is one that would have inspired confidence from any of the other members of the organization that might be relying on it for help in the future.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Turner.

Mr. Chair, I would like to move a motion that I circulated last week and that has duly been put on notice:

That the committee strongly condemns the killing of Mahsa Amini at the hands of the so-called Iranian "morality police", a direct consequence of the systemic and sustained harassment and repression of women by the Iranian government; that this committee reiterates its support for women's rights as human rights; that this committee salutes the courage of the Iranian women and men protesting in over 100 cities across the country and stands in solidarity with all those demonstrating against the Iranian regime's appalling practices; that this committee calls on the Iranian authorities to immediately cease its use of deadly force against peaceful protesters and refrain from committing further acts of violence against its own population; that this committee reiterates its support of Canada's sanctions regime against Iran; and that this committee report this motion to the House.

Mr. Chair, I certainly understand the importance of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It was my motion to study this topic today. However, given the developments in Iran, I believe this is of the utmost importance. I hope that we can deal with this matter swiftly and report back to the House, pursuant to the terms of the motion.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Genuis.

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

I very much agree about the importance of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. I also agree, certainly, about the importance of the situation in Iran. Given time and before I go any further with my comments, I wonder if there might be unanimous consent to thank the witnesses and let them take their leave. I'll then continue with some other remarks.

• (1815)

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Mr. Chair, I hoped that we could deal with this and come back to the witnesses.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Okay. I don't know if we will, because I have a couple of amendments to move. If that's the preference, then that's fine. I'll just continue.

Mr. Chair, let me say that Conservatives are very supportive of strong action to hold the Iranian regime accountable. In fact, we have been calling for precisely this action for a very, very long time. I welcome some of the comments that have been made on this by our colleagues across the way. We want to see concrete action from the government following up with those comments. I don't doubt the sincerity of some individual members on the government side, but I think from the government in general, it's not enough to express solidarity and then fail to take the actions that are concrete-ly within the government's power and authority to do.

Mr. Chair, you have two amendments from me to this motion. I want to start by moving what was amendment number two in a list that I sent you. This is a smaller amendment, which would add the following words:

and calls on the government of Canada to immediately list the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist entity under Canada's Criminal Code;

That would come towards the end of the motion, right before "and that this committee report this motion to the House".

I'll make a couple of comments about this. The House voted in the majority more than four years ago to immediately list the IRGC as a terrorist entity. That was before the downing of flight 752. That was before the murder of Ms. Amini, yet that was also still, even four years ago, after so many horrific crimes had been committed by the regime. A majority of the House, including the Prime Minister and the cabinet, voted for what was my motion, actually, to list the IRGC as a terrorist entity, yet in four years the government has failed to act on that. Now we hear discussion of additional sanctions being proposed by the government.

I will add as well that we haven't seen anyone get sanctioned under the Magnitsky act. Hopefully, those were the sanctions the Prime Minister was referring to, although we haven't heard specifics.

This is a very narrow, very specific amendment that speaks precisely to something that the government has previously voted for but hasn't acted on.

Maybe just in conclusion on this amendment, I believe a previous version of the foreign affairs committee actually reiterated that call at the end of that same Parliament. This is something that this committee has called for and this is something that Parliament has called for, so I hope we'll get support from all members for this important amendment.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Genuis.

We will now go to Ms. McPherson.

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** My comments were on the original motion, not the amended motion.

**The Chair:** Okay.

We will go to Mr. Oliphant.

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

I was going to speak on the motion as well, but I will speak on the amendment. I have concerns with it, because I think this amendment demands more attention. I think for our committee to now seriously take this motion and take it to the House requires that we understand all the implications of it, which I'm not sure even I do, having studied it.

I want to know what effect this sanctioning... It's more than sanctioning; I want to know what effect this listing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps would have on citizens in Canada who have had military experience with Iran and now have lived in Canada for some time. I would want to know what impact it has on the reality of the situation and whether or not it actually will help in the current context of what is going on. I'd like to have more information and more context.

As people in this room know, we don't have a mission now in Tehran. That was closed by a previous government, which we have understood as an important closure. Diplomatic relations with Iran are now very difficult for us, and it's very difficult to understand exactly what's happening on the ground in Iran. We are working with allies and like-minded people to understand the very difficult situation with activities going on in dozens of communities around Iran in response to Ms. Amini's death as well as the death of a few dozen other protesters who have been in solidarity with her.

I think it's really important for us to take this very seriously and I think I would like to sleep on it. Even though I believe the motion that Ms. Bendayan has put forward is critically important, I would move at this time that we adjourn debate on the amendment.

• (1820)

**The Chair:** We will go to a vote, if you could kindly take it, Clerk.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Ariane Gagné-Frégeau):** The vote is on adjourning the debate on the amendment of Garnett Genuis.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

In light of our scheduled plans for next week, I wonder if there would be unanimous consent to seek to schedule an additional meeting this week in order to finish the debate. Mr. Oliphant carried the majority of committee in terms of wanting to sleep on it, but I would like to be able to come back to this motion later this week, given the urgency that's been stated, rather than needing to cut into some of our planned business for next week.

**The Chair:** Is there unanimous consent to that?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** No. I don't give unanimous consent on it because I don't even know what my week is like. Today is Wednesday. We have one more day, and then we have a very important day of reconciliation and remembrance on Friday, so that would mean a meeting tomorrow to follow that.

I can't give you unanimous consent without even knowing what my day is like tomorrow, or what anyone's day is like tomorrow. It seems to be impossible, so I don't give unanimous consent on that.

**The Chair:** I have Ms. Bendayan.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Mr. Chair, I wish to raise a point of order because I want to understand the situation well.

We have just adjourned the debate on the amendment, but the motion itself is still under consideration. Is that correct?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Yes, correct.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** No, I have a point of order. That's not correct. When you adjourn debate, a debate is over on the motion as well as the amendment. That's the implication of what you chose to do.

**The Chair:** I understand that Mr. Genuis is correct, because the debate was adjourned.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** We're going to have to resume questioning of the witnesses at this particular time.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Before we move on to the questioning of the witnesses, I have a point of order. Debate has been adjourned on the motion. When do you plan on bringing debate back to this committee on that motion? This is a matter of a great deal of interest for us and for many Canadians.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** And for the mover of the motion.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** The motion now belongs to the committee. Mr. Chair, when are you planning on bringing this debate back to committee?

**The Chair:** Should we do it on Monday evening, after we've gone through the report? I believe it—

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Mr. Chair, respectfully, isn't it up to the mover of the motion to decide when they would bring back their own motion?

**Hon. Michael Chong:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, no, the motion belongs to the committee. Once a motion has been moved, it belongs to the committee as a whole.

Mr. Chair, as you are our chair, I'm asking you when you plan on bringing it back. Setting aside time after Monday's testimony would make sense to me, if other members of the committee agree.

• (1825)

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** I was asking the clerk for clarification. If I moved the motion and it is adjourned, is it now up to the committee or is it up to the mover of the motion?

I was asking the clerk.

**The Clerk:** It's up to the committee now.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Chair, just on the point of order, I think that if members of the committee are amenable, after we hear from the witnesses at Monday's meeting, perhaps we could set aside half an hour. We could do a two-and-a-half-hour meeting on Monday, with two hours for the witnesses and then half an hour at the end for consideration of the motion in front of the committee, if it is the wish of the committee to proceed that way.

**The Chair:** Agreed. I think everyone would like to return to this—

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

While I hear what Mr. Chong is saying, I don't know that we can suggest that we will go to a two-and-a-half-hour meeting unless the clerk is able to tell us whether we have the option to do so, because the resources, etc., for a two-and-a-half-hour meeting mean that we have to get permission from the powers that be to have a two-and-a-half-hour meeting.

First we should see if the clerk says that we can, and then the committee should decide if it wants to go to two and a half hours.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Dr. Fry.

You've raised a significant issue. The clerk is advised. She will certainly look into that and she will provide confirmation as to whether resources will be available after the two hours our committee is meeting on Monday.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Bergeron.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

If this proposal does not go forward, could we not hear from the witnesses for an hour and a half and set aside half an hour for the consideration of this motion?

Let me say in passing that the reason I opposed the adjournment on the amendment was that I had not had an opportunity to speak on the amendment.

Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bergeron.

Yes, on Monday we will be reviewing the vaccine equity report. In the event that resources are not available after the two-hour committee meeting, we will adjust that. We will go over the report for only an hour and a half, and then return to this amendment.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Chair, could you clarify the calendar? The calendar we agreed to up to the end of October had the Gazprom study on Monday and then the vaccine equity report on Tuesday. Are we flipping those around? Are we going to hear the Gazprom study on Wednesday?

**The Chair:** Yes. That's what I referenced when we first commenced this committee.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** I see. Okay.

**The Chair:** The clerk and the analyst took into consideration some of the suggestions that were made. They also looked at the availability of witnesses for the turbine study, so they moved these—

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Independent of this question around the Iran motion, were there any other changes made to the October calendar or not? It was approved as originally sent around.

• (1830)

**The Chair:** I don't think there are any other changes for October.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Excellent.

**The Chair:** Give me one second. Allow me to confirm that.

To confirm, I've been advised by the clerk that on October 17, we will be hearing from Siemens and the Canadian Gas Association. One slight change that was made is that on October 26, we will be hearing from Minister Sajjan. He was not available for another date, so he has been put down for October 26.

Other than that, everything remains the same.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** What are we planning on doing on October 5?

**The Chair:** On October 5, we'll continue with the vaccine equity report.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** All right. Thanks.

**The Chair:** The schedule has now been set. We will look into the availability of the room. If we do not get two hours, we will discuss this motion on Monday.

Given that it is now 6:30 and resources are not available, I'm going to have to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting is adjourned.

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