



Peter Goldring, Member of Parliament for Edmonton East, Vice-chair of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Committee and member of Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, hosted a freewheeling question and answer session on Parliament Hill for the 35 student interns taking part in the 2011 Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program.

Mr. Goldring started the meeting with some background, telling the students of his long involvement in Canada-Ukraine affairs. Of all Members of Parliament he is the one who has been the most involved with Ukraine and Ukrainian issues. Although Mr. Goldring is not of Ukrainian background himself, his wife, Lorraine is, as well as their two daughters and three granddaughters.

In April 1999 Mr. Goldring was first to refer to Holodomor in the House of Commons as a genocide and has made reference in the House several times before the House formally recognized the issue in 2008.

As Canadian delegate to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in 2008 he also took the lead when Russian delegates to the annual Parliamentary Assembly tried to have Holodomor defined as merely a famine, not a genocide. Thanks to his intervention the Ukrainian motion passed unamended.

Mr. Goldring was in Ukraine as election monitor for failed presidential election in November 2004 and then stayed on for the entire 10 days of the Orange Revolution, despite attempts to intimidate him and have him leave.

He spoke to several hundreds of thousands in Independence Square, telling them "Canada is with you!" to thunderous applause. Also, in spite of secret service intimidation and scare tactics, interference and blood in his room, he reported day and night of the Revolution to Canadian viewers and readers coast to coast. He has re-

turned to Ukraine as an election monitor in all presidential and parliamentary elections



Stacy Tsarkova, one of the student coordinators of the 2011 CUPP program asked to do her internship in the office of Peter Goldring.



since.

In Canada Mr. Goldring has been heavily involved in Ukrainian issues. As Chair of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group he organized the 75th anniversary Holodomor service on the Hill with Prime Minister Harper as guest speaker. He is a frequent speaker at Ukrainian-Canadian events (most recently the Bloor Street West Ukrainian Festival in September 2011). At his instigation the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development has been conducting a study of the geopolitical realities of democracy in Ukraine.

After giving some background Mr. Goldring threw the meeting open to questions from the students:

Question: Can you tell us more about the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group? What are the outcomes and results it is hoping for?

Mr. Goldring: It's an all-party group that highlights Ukraine issues for Parliamentarians. It meets regularly with the Ambassador of Ukraine to Canada, organizes special events such as the annual Holodomor service on the Hill, engages with the Ukrainian-Canadian community and encourages its members to take part in election monitoring missions to Ukraine.

Mr. Goldring added he would like to see the

group establish ties with a similar group of Members of Parliament in the Verkhovna Rada (Ukraine's Parliament).

Question: What about Canada-Ukraine business relationships?

Mr. Goldring: There are many opportunities for Canadian businesses to partner with Ukrainian companies for mutual benefit. The key is to identify areas of strength where partnerships can be formed, such as the shipbuilding arrangements between Finnish and Polish companies, or the textile manufacturing company Gildan, which has its headquarters in Canada but its production facilities in Haiti.

Question: Do you think Ukraine is progressing, regressing or at a standstill?

Mr. Goldring: There has been much political progress since the failed presidential election of 2004 that sparked the Orange Revolution. Elections since then have been reported by international observers as "free and fair" for the most part. However the system of party politics has not progressed over that time, which poses as problem. In particular, with so many parties, 40-50, it is very difficult to develop and retain political policy.

While economic progress is visible to anyone who has visited Kyiv, there is still work that could be done on the regulatory process for



The Embassy of Ukraine hosted a talent show featuring the 2011 interns. Both Peter and Lorraine Goldring were able to attend.



businesses, especially banking regulations.

There is also a need to look at the treatment of present and former politicians. There is no sense to providing immunity to politicians for their good-faith acts while they are in office if they can be prosecuted and jailed as soon as they are no longer in office. Such a system does not encourage anyone to get involved in politics.

Question: What about Canada-Ukraine relations in light of recent events (the arrest, trial and conviction of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko)?

Mr. Goldring: It's important that Canada not disengage from Ukraine, not impose sanctions as some have called for. What is needed he added is good, firm discussion, some of which he has participated in himself.

He added that it isn't right that politicians be given immunity against prosecution for their actions while they hold public office, only to have that immunity withdrawn and criminal charges laid when they leave office. "That is unacceptable" he stated, pointing out that people will be reluctant to enter public life in such a situation.

Question: Many in Ukraine understand that societal change can take time and it may be generations for true reforms to take root. However those in the Ukrainian-Canadian Diaspora are impatient for change. How is Canada

dealing with the present situation?

Mr. Goldring: Prime Minister Stephen Harper has made his dissatisfaction clear, as has Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird. The Tymoshenko case may be raised at the next meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly. But what it boils down to is what do the people of Ukraine want to happen?



Peter Goldring was asked to speak at the event honouring the 2011 CUPP interns held at the Embassy of Ukraine.

He further noted that the leaders of the Orange Revolution had squandered opportunity by failing to work together in government.

Question: What was the incentive to call the Holodomor a genocide? (In April 1999 Mr. Goldring became the first Canadian Member of Parliament to so label the 1932-33 famine in Ukraine and was behind government efforts

to officially recognize the Holdomor as a genocide).

Mr. Goldring: There was a movement in Canada to include a permanent Holocaust display in the Canadian War Museum, something that was opposed by veterans groups. Mr. Goldring at the time was Veterans Affairs Chief Critic and involved in the discussion. He was aware of the Holodomor and pointed out it was a genocide equal to the Holocaust, although much less known. Mr. Goldring

called for a museum to be created to exhibit the darker side of humanity – genocide – including the genocide by famine in Ukraine. Since that time he has worked on increasing awareness of the Holodomor in Canada and internationally.

Question: When will Canada and Ukraine move forward on the discussions for a Free Trade Agreement? Is it only a political gesture?

Mr. Goldring: A free trade agreement is both political and economic. It would highlight the already close relationship between the two countries. Free trade is not a magic wand, but it does open a lot of doors for business.

Ukraine’s strategic location means such an agreement could be very beneficial to both countries – it would be more than just dropping a lot of tariffs and duty.

Question: What do you think of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program?

Mr. Goldring: Having taken part in the program for many years what has stood out the most is the calibre and quality of the students who have taken part. They truly are the future leaders of Ukraine. “Maybe there’s a president here in this room,” he added.

Update: The students of the 21st annual Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program have returned to Ukraine. The 2012 participants will arrive in September.

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This brochure series is intended to highlight special issues that Member of Parliament, Peter Goldring, has been involved in. If you wish to comment, please take a moment to fill out the survey below, write or call to the address above.

Your Opinion Matters...

Question 1 Do you think Canada should be more vocal regarding Ukraine’s lack of judicial independence?

Yes No

Question 2 Do you believe that a Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Ukraine will be mutually beneficial?

Yes No

Comments: _____

Name: _____
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