

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY KAZAKHSTAN



MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT



PETER GOLDRING

At the 2008 Organization For Security and Cooperation In Europe Parliamentary Assembly, held in Astana, Kazakhstan Peter Goldring once again found himself intervening and strongly speaking against describing the Holodomor as a mere famine as Russian delegates wanted. The Ukrainian word holodomor means starvation by killing or murder. The Holodomor was a genocide by one man - Stalin.

Against strong Russian opposition he was instrumental in helping Ukraine pass a resolution entitled "The Holodomor of 1932-33 in Ukraine. It was proposed by Ukraine MP Oleh Bilorus, Chairman of Ukraine's Foreign Affairs Committee in the OSCE's "General Committee On Democracy Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions".

Several proposed amendments, encouraged by Russia through Turkey were clearly intended to water down Ukraine's resolution and re-define the Holodomor as a mere famine and not as a genocide. Mr. Goldring forcefully stated that a famine is created by

nature while the Holodomor, the death by forced starvation, was created by one man (Stalin). Turkey withdrew the amendments rather than face the now obviously accepted distinction.

In the plenary session, after the supportive American delegation had left, Russia again attempted to drastically amend the resolution, but Mr. Goldring again spoke forcefully against the Russian revisionist amendments in support of Ukraine and the un-amended resolution was passed by a near unanimous vote, to Ukraine's sheer delight.

Here is the text of his speech:

Thank you Madam Chair.

I would like to join my fellow delegates from Canada and speak in support of this supplementary item.

The more than 8 million who perished in Ukraine in this planned famine, the Holodomor, did not die from the ravages of nature, nor the

scourge of pestilence, nor by the obliteration of war, but by the hand of man.

Seventy-five years ago, the world took no action against such a tragedy. There were no commemorations. Since then, with



Twice Peter spoke forcefully, defending the Ukrainian Holodomor Resolution from Russian attack. Peter is shown with the appreciative Ukrainian delegation after their Holodomor resolution passed.



every horrible incident of a people killed by their own government, we are painfully reminded of the high costs paid by future generations for past inaction against the horrors and genocides inflicted by the human race on itself.

By adopting this resolution and commemorating the Holodomor, we will take an important step forward in stopping this cycle. We remember the victims of the Holodomor, of the dark side of humanity, and by remembering we help the world guard against those who would repeat such genocide.

In May of 2008, the Parliament of Canada recognized the Holodomor as an act of genocide.

I wish to make one more point that is salient to this issue. Media in Montreal reported that the Holodomor may have been crop failure. I grew up on a farm that had very poor soil, more clay than loam. Growing crops was a challenge even with good weather. I envied farmers with good land.

When I first visited my wife-to-be's family farm in Northern Alberta, I was struck by the rich deep soil. They have farmed that land for more than 100 years without crop failure, coming to Canada from Ukraine in 1905. Last year I was election monitoring in the Poltava region of Ukraine, 300 Km east of Kiev. I was struck again by the richness of

the land and similarity with Northern Alberta. I even commented to local citizens about this similarity.

Rich land such as this is not subject to catastrophic crop failure by pestilence or drought. Ukraine's famine was diabolically man-made.

Those that believe that the Holodomor was simply a famine are wrong. The word Holodomor comes from two words: starvation and murder/kill. A famine is mostly created by "nature"; by weather, by insect infestation, by poor soil. The Holodomor was created by one "man".

I ask everyone to support this resolution. Thank you.

Mr. Goldring had previously spoken about the Holodomor at the sub-committee on human rights. Normally a resolution adopted there would then go through cursory review by the plenary assembly the final day.

At that meeting Mr. Goldring said:

I wish to speak in favour of this resolution and commend the OSCE and members for your support and adoption.

This resolution is unambiguous and describes the Holodomor, which is a Ukrainian word meaning "starvation" and "killing by starvation." It is not an expression of famine.

Famine is a word describing one of the effects of a natural calamity. The Holodomor



American delegates asked Peter to speak strongly on Georgia's resolution calling for Russia to cease aggression. Peter is shown with the suitably grateful Georgian delegation after their resolution passed.



was created by man, not by nature. The land, the soil of Ukraine is too deep, too rich to have had a naturally created famine. I again commend this august body of Parliamentarians for recognizing this historical fact.

As the Holodomor Remembrance Flame travels the world on its journey to Kiev for this fall, our collective voice on this issue is right, so it is fair we must remember acts of man's inhumanity to man, so that we learn not to repeat.

Congratulations to my Ukrainian colleagues and congratulations to this assembly. Thank you.

The night before the assembly meeting to pass the Holodomor resolution Mr. Goldring was approached by the Georgian delegation leader, who expressed great concern that Russia was going to instigate a procedural move, to remove both their resolution (regarding Georgia's security environment) and the Ukrainian resolution on Holodomor. After much research and consultation, Mr. Goldring was prepared for the next day.

The Russians attacked the Georgian resolution first, and tried to have it removed. Mr. Goldring spoke in support, just after the Georgian delegation leader. The Georgian resolution passed and the Georgian delegation was very pleased at Canada's support.

The next issue was the Holodomor. The Russians again objected and attempted to overturn it.

Mr. Goldring had asked the Ukrainian delegation leader if he wanted Canada to lead the support, which was gladly accepted.



Ukrainian Member of Parliament Oleh Bilorus, head of the Ukrainian delegation at the OSCE Assembly in Astana, Kazakhstan, turned to Peter Goldring for help in successfully passing their resolution on the Holodomor.

The newly elected OSCE vice-chair, from Kazakhstan, spoke on Russia's behalf against recognizing the Holodomor as a genocide. His status, speaking from the Plenary Meeting's executive table, was intended as a forceful executive direction to the members to vote the resolution down.

The Assembly sensed fully what was happening and in spite of great Russian resistance voted with substantial majority against the Russians.

Mr. Goldring's speech to the assembly was influential, particularly for those who missed his first speech in the sub-committee on Human Rights.

The Ukrainian Delegation, led by Oleh Bilorus, was overwhelmed with joy at the passing of their resolution in its entirety – no amendments whatsoever – and was extremely appreciative of Canadian support, particularly under the last minute very substantial attack by Russia.

Also at the Astana meeting the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly called for a detailed

discussion among all relevant actors on the use of private military companies and private security companies in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict situations; underlined the urgent need for the international community to increase co-operation and information exchange in the field of cyber security and cyber crime; urged the Government of the Russian Federation, in its contacts with the de facto authorities of the secessionist regions of Georgia, to refrain from maintaining ties with those regions in any manner that would constitute a challenge to the sovereignty of Georgia as well as calling on the Russian Federation to abide by OSCE standards and generally accepted international norms with respect to the threat or use of force to resolve conflicts in relations with

other participating States. and called on the parliaments of the OSCE participating States to vigorously support and accelerate all multi-lateral, inter-institutional and bilateral initiatives that promote the liberalization of trade between North America and Europe, including the harmonization of standards and the elimination of regulatory barriers.

In the final plenary session Peter Goldring was called upon by the American delegation to, in their absence, assist and defend the Georgian delegation's call for the cessation of Russian hostilities against Georgia. After Mr. Goldring intervened and further debate the resolution, which also passed, to the great appreciation of the Georgian delegation.

Update: On August 10, 2008 Russia invaded Georgia and shelled the capital, Tibilisi. After a series of battles a ceasefire was agreed to, however Russian troops remain in the breakaway regions of South Ossieta and Abkhazia. The United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) monitors the ceasefire and has had its mandate extended until June 15.

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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

Your Opinion Matters...

Question #1: Do you think there is a benefit to Canada in taking part in international organizations like the OSCE?

Yes No

Question #2: Do you feel the discussions at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will have an impact on international cooperation?

Yes No

Comments: _____

Name: _____
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