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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Rideau institute calls two-year “stealth” extension of Canada’s military mission in Iraq “reckless and irresponsible” and a slight to parliamentary oversight.

OTTAWA— By DND press release today, the Trudeau government announced a two-year extension of Canada’s military mission in Iraq. The only stated change to the “advise and assist” non-combat mandate was to allow for the training of “new potential partners” within the Iraqi security forces, beyond the current focus on Kurdish fighters.

“The situation on the ground in Iraq is about to radically change with the impending demise of the territorial phase of the Islamic State enterprise,” said Peggy Mason, President of the Rideau Institute. “Canadian military trainers may find themselves not only confronting a diffused Islamic state insurgency but a Kurdish independence movement and deep sectarian divisions between the Shia-controlled Iraqi government and the Sunni majority population.”

This is precisely the kind of changed circumstances that requires a full debate and discussion in Parliament, following a detailed review and assessment in the Standing Committee on National Defence, argues Mason.

“Instead what we have from the Trudeau government is a press release, after Parliament has recessed, and two days before the July 1st festivities begin, which appears to delegate the responsibility for updating the mission in light of evolving circumstances to the Canadian military, without even the involvement of the government, let alone Parliament”.

“Such a delegation of authority down to military commanders is entirely reminiscent of similar actions taken by President Trump and is an affront to democratic transparency and accountability,” Mason concluded.

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