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Excerpt:

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair:**

... I will then read Peggy Mason, who just yesterday, Sunday, October 5, wrote a very thoughtful piece in the *Ottawa Citizen*. It is important to know that [Rideau Institute President] Peggy Mason, is Canada's former United Nations ambassador for disarmament and an adviser to the then Conservative external affairs minister, Joe Clark.



**Hon. John Baird:** Progressive.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** Mr. Speaker, the minister throws out the word "Progressive" as if it were a slur. Yes, she was a Progressive Conservative.

...

Peggy Mason, Canada's former UN ambassador for disarmament and special adviser to former Progressive Conservative minister of external affairs Joe Clark, was quoted yesterday in the *Ottawa Citizen*, as follows:

"[Prime Minister]'s Iraq plan may make matters worse, says former ambassador".

[The Prime Minister] will put Canada's proposed combat military mission in Iraq to a vote on Monday. Recent polls have suggested that Canadians slightly favour the bombing mission to confront the threat posed by the extremist organization, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). It comes as no surprise that Canadians want to help and "do something".

But [the Prime Minister]'s plan to send Canadian warplanes to join the U.S.-led coalition's bombing of Iraq may just make matters worse.

[The Prime Minister] and his allies are underestimating their opponents as a bunch of religious extremists bent on spreading wanton mayhem and terror. Islamic State may be brutally ruthless, but they know exactly what they are doing.

Their core is made up of seasoned, motivated fighters and an extremely experienced leadership that go back to the “dirty war” waged by the American and British Special Forces in Iraq between 2006 and 2009.

ISIL is playing a strategical game of chess with its every move, while the West is playing military tic-tac-toe.

ISIL is not just a military organization, it is a political movement with a well-thought-out ideology, however abhorrent it may be to the West. It governs the huge areas it controls in Iraq and Syria. Ruthless in eliminating any potential opponents, it also provides electricity, food and other vital services for ordinary people in the areas it controls.

That is why American air strikes against ISIL recently targeted not only oil and gas facilities but also grain elevators--a highly problematic course of action in both legal and humanitarian terms, particularly if the conflict is to be a long one.

To date Western military action has been disastrously counterproductive.

[The Prime Minister] says “we” are not responsible for the chaos in Libya. Yet it is absolutely clear that the NATO-led military victory in Libya was a pyrrhic one which paved the way for the civil war that followed.

We have to remember how we got to this point. Time and again in the past, we have chosen war over negotiations.

Look at the lessons of Libya. Had we not exceeded the UN mandate in Libya (which excluded regime change), we could have negotiated a power-sharing deal... that would have promoted incremental democratic reform and not left a power vacuum to be filled by extremists, including ISIL.

Exactly the same lesson can be learned from Syria. Had the West not insisted on Assad’s immediate departure and refused to allow Iran a seat at the table, Kofi Annan’s power-sharing arrangement within a transitional government would have paved the way for incremental democratic reforms in Syria and, once again, would have left much less room for extremists like ISIL to operate.

A UN mandate privileging inclusive governance and democratic reforms in concert with robust military support has been central to recent progress in Somalia and Mali. A UN mandate is also possible for effective intervention in Iraq and Syria if all necessary players, including Russia and Iran, are brought fully into the negotiations, and Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states are at the core of the political strategy, not just token participants.

A comprehensive, broadly supported and UN-mandated approach is long overdue in the heretofore disastrously counterproductive war on terror. Let this enlightened approach be the basis for Canadian action in Iraq and Syria.

As I said, that is from [Rideau Institute President] Peggy Mason, Canada’s former UN ambassador for disarmament and adviser to then Progressive Conservative external affairs minister Joe Clark.