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## SSEA WELCOMES RELEASE OF CANADIANS IN IRAQ

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today welcomed the news that Iraq had decided to release five of the Canadians it has been holding illegally, and he condemned the Iraqi government's decision to continue to prevent other Canadian and foreign nationals from leaving Iraq.

"The release of even only a few Canadians from Iraq is welcome to all Canadians. Nevertheless, the Iraqi government has always had, and continues to have, a clear international obligation to allow the Canadians to leave. We once again call upon the Iraqi authorities to release immediately the rest of the foreign nationals being held in Iraq," stated the Minister.

Mr. Clark noted that the hopes of the families in Canada of Canadians in Kuwait had been raised by the private humanitarian mission of the three members of Parliament, and that for most of them their immediate hopes have been shattered by the Iraqi decision to continue holding their relatives. To these families, and to the Canadians still in Iraq, Mr. Clark gave his assurances that the Canadian government will continue to make the strongest representations that Iraq comply fully with its obligations to permit all foreigners to leave the country.

Mr. Clark said that the Canadian Embassy would be doing everything necessary to ensure that those Canadians who were released would have a safe and quick trip home.

The five Canadians released are Messrs. Hasnain Abdul Aziz, from Thornhill, Ontario, F. Lee Binns from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Robert W. Beck, from Edmonton, Alberta, Donald McKen, from Edmonton, Alberta and Thomas Wolf, from Rocky Mountain House, Alberta. They will leave Baghdad in the next few days, after processing of their documents by the Iraqi authorities. The Embassy has also been informed that a further elderly Canadian, for whose release the Embassy has been pressing on humanitarian

grounds, will probably be allowed to leave in the next few days.

After the departure of the five Canadians who have received permission to leave, the number of Canadians still in Kuwait and Iraq and unable to leave will be 41, of whom 14 are in Kuwait and 27 in Iraq. Of the latter, nine are members of the Canadian diplomatic staff or their families who were in the Canadian Embassy in Kuwait at the time of the Iraqi invasion, and who are now in Baghdad.

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