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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Amiskwacîwâskahikan) Price Waterhouse (PWH) report on policing was made public October 29, 2021. This report was commissioned during a time of a pandemic and released in a pandemic. “The whole report was commissioned and paid for by the United Conservative Party (UCP) without any discussion with First Nations in Alberta” said Grand Chief Greg Desjarlais of the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations.

The Grand Chief continued: when the study was announced last year, the Chiefs questioned the role of the report and its relationship to First Nations. When our Peoples entered into Treaty with the British Crown, our own police force was not displaced. The Northwest Mounted Police (NWMP) were allowed in our territory to protect us against the Queen’s subjects. They were to stop the whiskey traders and the wolfers from interfering with our Peoples. Over the years, the NWMP were changed to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). In this transition, Alberta tried and failed to implement their own police force. The force was shut down in the early 1930’s due to lack of monies.

The Confederacy of Treaty Six Chiefs were not included in any discussions related to the terms of reference for the PWH report. Was the report limited to the issue of provincial jurisdiction? From the news reports, we have learnt that the costs would be about \$735 million each year. There is an additional cost of \$366 million in startup costs. That is a billion dollars on an experiment of the UCP. The startling comments regarding using existing human resources and the government’s financial services to save money, really? Where are these resources in the time of a pandemic? It also suggested drafting agreements with municipal forces to share specialized police services, including canine units, air support and tactical squads. Have the municipal governments been asked? What about the federal monies used by First Nations to engage the RCMP? For First Nations in Treaty Six, there are more questions than answers.

This is another case of the UCP making unilateral decisions without consideration of the implications. Replacing a police force is not an easy task. The “War Room” found a cartoon. The report on policing has found another sinkhole of the taxpayers of Alberta to assume liability.

If there is going to be a different police force, the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations want to re-establish our own fully equipped Treaty Six Force that will work with the Nations within Treaty Six Territory. Our Chiefs have already rejected the roll out of RAPID (Rural Alberta Provincial Integrated Defence). Our Chiefs will not allow Sheriffs, Commercial Vehicle Enforcement and Fish and Wildlife officers to come onto our federal reserved lands and that includes an Alberta Provincial Police Enforcement.

The Confederacy of Treaty Six Chiefs call on the federal government to honour the Treaties and their responsibilities and obligations to fund through the existing FNPP process and release funding from the \$6 million dollar announcement to Treaty Six for research and development of our own police service immediately. This funding should not go to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) nor the AFN Alberta Regional office who does not represent us on this matter.

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