

Preparing for Invasion:

A guide to the current threats against the Mohawk Nation

This collection of articles has been put together to give some **background information** to the current military and police threats against Mohawk communities of Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Kanehsatake, and Akwasasne and place them in some historical context. Here is what you'll find here:

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Advisory:

Tyendinaga, Mohawk Territory

Mohawks Told to Brace for RCMP/Military Invasion in Spring

Recently, Tyendinaga community members have been told on two separate occasions, by two different sources, that an invasion into the community, led by the RCMP and backed by the Canadian Military, is planned for Saturday April 1st, 2006.

Please read on for further understanding of the context in which this invasion is likely to occur.

1. Recent Military Training Exercises

Wednesday, February 8, 2006, 8:30 PM – 2 army helicopters conduct flights, flying at levels of less than 100 feet and spotlight people's homes and businesses. One chopper lands on the centre runway of the Tyendinaga Airport. When questioned by community members as to the purpose of their presence, military personnel, wearing full uniform, helmet and night vision goggles say they are conducting routine training. They do not respond to questions with respect to who has provided them authorization to engage in 'training' on the Territory and instead, return to the helicopter and fly away, conducting no further manoeuvres over the Reserve.

Thursday, February 9, 2006 – Similar night flights occur in Kahnawake, Akwesasne and Kanehsatake.

Wednesday, February 15, 2006, 9:30 PM - 2 Army helicopters conduct low-level flights, spotlighting homes and businesses in Tyendinaga.

Summer 2005 - Canadian and U.S. Special Operations Soldiers are discovered where the CN Rail Lines cross into the Reserve. Once confronted, they leave without further incident.

Summer 2005- Canadian Military personnel are discovered on a stretch road near the northern boundary of the reserve. When confronted, dozens of soldiers emerge from the trees on either side of the road and leave.

These and numerous other incursions that have occurred over the past months and years cause the community grave concern and have prompted Tyendinaga's Band Council to write the Military as recently as February 9, 2006.

2. Tobacco

Since 1994, the Federal Government has been quietly organizing a new strategy to deal with its approach to tobacco sales within all Mohawk communities. The crime that they allege is committed is the manufacturing and sale of Native-made Cigarettes. A deal signed in November 2003 between Kanehsatake and the Solicitor General was reportedly aimed at targeting the Indians' claims to the

inherent right of inter-tribal trade with sister Mohawk communities and the native run tobacco manufacturing industry as a whole.

The Federal Government reaps billions of dollars in revenue from the taxes on tobacco. However, massive military and police operations are deemed by the government to be warranted against the very people it has kept drinking dirty water and living in sub-standard housing, at the very time when we have begun to develop self-reliant economic strategies to improve our quality of life.

Tyendinaga has brought the use of tobacco as a viable economic resource for the community to the forefront. We are not afraid to talk about the First Nations tobacco trade and we will not allow our families to be criminalized for engaging in simple, straightforward business practices.

3. Government Lies

Here on Tyendinaga, we expect to be imminently confronted with Government propaganda attempting to portray us as dangerous and criminal. There are clear historical precedents upon which we base this belief.

In September 1995, Government propaganda specifically stated, "There is no burial ground in Ipperwash Provincial Park. These people are on the fringe and are not supported by the council for the Band." A few short days later, three Anishnawbe were shot, one fatally, and people who tried to help were beaten. The most severe beating was in-fact reserved for a band council member. Then Minister of Indian Affairs, Ron Irwin, was forced into admitting that there was in fact a burial ground in the park, after proof was presented and Dudley George lay dead.

In 2002, Ottawa Citizen journalist David Pugliese published a book entitled "*Canada's Secret Commandos, Joint Task Force Two*". Detailing the aborted Scorpion Saxon Operation of 1994 (referenced below), Pugliese talked about Tyendinaga and the possibility of community members planning to sabotage the water treatment plant in the neighbouring community of Deseronto, Ontario. According to Pugliese, JTF2's intelligence cell was to watch for the releasing of "toxic waste into the treatment plant to poison the water system." Pugliese neglected to note that no less than half of Tyendinaga's households draw water from that very plant, making its sabotage a remote possibility to say the least.

4. The Prepared Invasion in 1994

In 1994, the Canadian Military trained for an invasion of 4 Mohawk communities: Kahnawake, Akwesasne, Kanehsatake and Tyendinaga. Entitled 'Scorpion Saxon Operation', it was to have involved some 1,500 soldiers, 2,000 RCMP and 2,000 Quebec officers. The invasions were to take place at night with the forces arriving by road, rail and air using helicopters and armoured vehicles. The soldiers would have had access to tear gas, smoke bombs and pepper spray. They were trained and had apparently perfected the use of 66 millimetre rockets and M-67 type fragmentation grenades. The operation involved low level helicopter training flights, flying below power lines and conducting shooting exercises at flight levels of 100 feet. At this time, the Military's most secret and elite unit, Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2), was also trained and on standby to participate in the operation. JTF2 soldiers were informed that the planned assault was expected to spark countrywide native protests and were told to prepare for multiple native-led strikes.

At the time, the Military called their assault preparations 'simple routine training'. It would appear the invasions were called off largely for two reasons: (1) CSIS issued a warning to the Federal

Government that the police measures would cause such “grave political violence” that it would be unpalatable to the Canadian public. (2) There were so many leaks, rumours and media coverage about the Military’s training activities at the time, the Army felt its element of surprise had been compromised. The Federal Government maintains the entire exercise was simply an attempt to curb the sale of Native Cigarettes.

4. In Conclusion

In the spring of 1992, Tyendinaga fishermen renewed the practice of harvesting fish by spear in various rivers throughout the Bay of Quinte area. These rivers fall within Mohawk Territorial waters, but run largely off reserve. While non-native fishermen are bound by Ontario law with respect to fishing seasons, catch quotas and licences, Mohawks fish free of similar, or in fact any, outside restrictions. Although this is based on historical practice and rights that have never been relinquished, the fishermen endured racist slurs, accusations that they would decimate the fish stocks and violence in order to provide food for their families. 14 years later we are still fishing and there are lots of fish.

It appears that we may again be facing violence and racism as we utilize another resource that has been with us since time immemorial. Tobacco can contribute to the maintenance and development of our families and our nation, on our own terms, and for years to come. In 2006 Mohawk people have established stores that sell pop, chips, newspapers, and cigarettes without criminal involvement. Tyendinaga is home to a number of viable and successful businesses that do not charge taxes on their goods or services. This does not make them criminal, it makes them Native-run.

(reference:

http://www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article_Type1&c=Article&pubid=968163964505&cid=1141599010624&col=968705899037&call_page=TS_News&call_pageid=968332188492&call_pagepath=News/News)

Mohawks fear action on trade in tobacco

Mar. 6, 2006. 01:00 AM

PETER EDWARDS

STAFF REPORTER

Community members of the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory in eastern Ontario say they're bracing for a combined Canadian Forces/RCMP operation targeting the cigarette trade next month.

"The whole community thinks it is the gospel and people are gearing up for it as if it was a fact," said Shawn Brant, 41, a father of three in the community of 2,800.

Brant said news of the planned operation leaked out from military sources, but he declined to elaborate.

Sgt. Martin Blais of the RCMP in Ottawa declined to comment. "We would not confirm or deny this or any operational matter," Blais said.

Among those attending a public meeting in Tyendinaga this week that dealt with fears there will be a military/RCMP operation was Brant Bardy, 43, co-ordinator for the aboriginal media course at the First Nations Technical Institute at Tyendinaga.

The meeting heard the operation would target businesses that sell cigarettes and tobacco products without paying sales tax.

Bardy, a life-long Tyendinaga resident, said the community was already upset after low-flying military helicopters from nearby Canadian Forces Base Trenton flew over residences and businesses the night of Feb. 8 and during the next day.

"They (the military) just come in here when they want," Bardy said.

"There's a growing animosity here. The attitude of the military has got to change."

However, Maj. Mike Lagace of the Canadian Air Force Air Wings headquarters in Winnipeg said relationships with local communities are important for the military.

"Stakeholder relations are an important consideration when conducting flying exercise or operations," Lagace said.

"As planners we consider how it affects surrounding communities. The Canadian Forces are very open to discussing concerns such as this," Lagace added.

Chief R. Donald Maracle of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, which includes the Tyendinaga reserve, said he wasn't able to attend this week's meeting about concerns over a combined Canadian Forces/RCMP operation on community land because he was undergoing surgery in Toronto.

However, Maracle noted he wrote a letter to the military Feb. 9 protesting the helicopter flights, saying "further activities will be viewed as harassment and a serious breach of protocol."

"We have a lot of people in our community who are decorated veterans," Maracle said in an interview.

"We do want to have a positive relationship with the military."

Bardy said he fears any operation on the reserve would end tragically, like when the Ontario Provincial Police marched on Ipperwash Provincial Park late at night Sept. 6, 1995, after Stoney Point Indians occupied the park.

**From the “Mohawk Nation Drummer”
Tyendinaga, Mohawk Nation Territory
March 2005**

The Sovereignty of the Mohawk People

Recent raids, into a small number of businesses on the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, has raised some concerns among local business owners here on Tyendinaga.

The issue is the sale and trade of tobacco products throughout native territories and within sister communities.

With news of the RCMP raids still fresh in peoples minds, Shawn Brant a representative of Tyendinaga Mohawk Tobacco Products (TMT), spoke with me surrounding the recent events in Six Nations and the future for Tyendinaga.

Brant began by saying, “In 1991 it was illegal for a Mohawk person to harvest fish from the Belleville and Napanee Rivers to feed their family. It took the overwhelming courage of this community to confront that issue, raise the public awareness and fight for the dignified right to feed ourselves, on our terms. I see the tobacco issue following that same course.”

“We have to stop accepting the version of events as told by the white man, and believe in who we are as a people. We are distinct, sovereign, and honourable. We herald from the greatest Nation this world will ever know.”

Defending his statement Brant cited a recent court ruling where the presiding Provincial Court Judge Collins agreed. In his ruling, Judge Collins found that Mohawk People truly represent a clear, separate and distinct nation of people. “They have existed long before the creation of Canada, and its laws, and more importantly, exercised the right of Treaty Making in its relationships with incurring sovereigns like the English, French and Dutch.

In the case at hand, it was ruled that the Albany Treaty signed in 1701, between Mohawk and British people, was in fact an example of the sovereign right that is vested with any Nation and subject to the standards set out under international rules of law.

Simply stated by Brant, “Our ancestors were of a nation of people and we are the true heirs and successors of that same nation.”

During the thirteen days of historical evidence, presented by the crown and defence, the court found that “Mohawk people clearly engaged in resource harvesting and trade for the purpose of economic benefit”.

Brant continues, “It is for these reasons that we must change our vocabulary from words like contraband, and replace them with words that recognize the tremendous value that this and other resources can provide. By utilizing this resource, as our ancestors did before us, we will then be able to contribute to the maintenance and development of our nation, on our own terms, and for years to come.”

While the raids in Six Nations yielded some hot community meetings and strong anti-government rhetoric, there was no immediate defensive strategy mechanism in place to stop further events from

happening. When asked about Tyendinaga's ability to respond to similar police tactics here, Brant concluded, "We are always organized and ready to meet the challenges that threaten the people, land, or law. I do not believe or see this as simply an issue of tobacco. This is about Bill C-20, FNG, and the OPP killing Dudley George. For us as Mohawk People, it is about seeing if we can believe again in who we are, as a society, and for the values that has preserved us for generations."

Army Was Poised To Invade Kahnawake **By: Kenneth Deer**

An article published in Le Journal de Montreal confirmed that the Canadian Armed Forces, the RCMP and the SQ were prepared to enter the three Mohawk communities of Kahnawake, Kanehsatake and Akwesasne in 1994. (See following story)



Under the Freedom of Information Act, reporter Marco Fortier obtained 1599 pages of documents which outlined a plan to send 2,000 RCMP, 2,000 SQ officers and 15,000 soldiers into the three communities to, ostensibly, stop the "illegal" trade in contraband cigarettes.

The report drew quick response from the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake. The MCK "is shocked but not surprised at the governments and police planned assault on Kahnawake, Kanehsatake and

Akwesasne in 1994. Although relations between the Provincial and Federal governments and Aboriginals has improved, the MCK will always be vigilant when dealing with any government and will remain conscious of the history."

"In 1994 the three Mohawk Chiefs of Kahnawake, Kanehsatake and Akwesasne were meeting with Federal Ministers to look at alternative and peaceful economic development measure to replace tobacco, apparently the governments had other plans - might is right and force is the answer.

"It is incredible to believe that a country (recently given the honour of most peaceful country) could have even planned such an attack."

Fortier submitted his request to the Armed Forces last October and waited eight months for a response.

"I knew the papers were there because there were so many rumours in 1994 about such a plan," said Fortier. "My goal was not to make anyone angry. I was not attacking the government or the Mohawks. I was just writing a story."

Fortier received the documents two weeks before the published report and he said that it was just a coincidence that it came out just after the powwow. A spokesman for National Defense could not be reached for comment.

CSIS involved

In a second article that appeared on Tuesday, July 13, Fortier reported that CSIS warned the government about any intervention on the reserves. "The police measures aiming to counter contraband activities (from the part of the Mohawk Warrior Society) will increase significantly the risk of grave political violence" according to the article.

CSIS was active in trying to recruit informants in the three communities. Jean Jolicoeur, described as a former resident of Kanehsatake, stated that he was approached by three operatives of CSIS in 1994. He said that he and two other Mohawks met with CSIS seven or eight times in Dorval and Laval. "We said nothing to them; if we had revealed something, we would be dead," Jolicoeur is quoted. He states that he warned the people on the reserve about these incidents.

The article goes on to say that the National Defense Department had placed a Special Investigations Unit with sophisticated equipment on alert. They were in charge of watching the barricades at the entrance to Kahnawake. They were also to watch the Longhouse, the Survival School, the Mohawk Nation Office and the Peacekeepers station according to Army documents.

In Kanehsatake, they were to watch the band council and the treatment center. In Akwesasne, the Seaway and the East end of Cornwall Island. "The Mohawk Warrior Society is the biggest extremist Aboriginal group and potentially the most violent in Canada", stated the CSIS report.

(Editor's note: The translation of the second article is not available)

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Secret operation cancelled

Training to the scale of expected Mohawk resistance

Night shooting, anti-tank combat, handling of fragmenting grenades: the military exercise of 1994 foresaw rough resistance by the Mohawks of Kahnawake, Kanesatake and Akwesasne

Article translated by Isobelle Schulte-Tenckhoff

By: Marco Fortier

The National Defence was to be guided by severe principles requiring minimal use of force, and had planned always to obey the rules, according to documents obtained by the Journal de Montreal.

But the weapons involved on both sides portended the risk of bloodshed.

"We must expect to have to confront people who are armed. Therefore, the commander in charge of tactics cannot risk exposing his soldiers equipped only with sticks and shields." warned a high-ranking representative of the Terrestrial Forces in an internal note dated February 1994.

Military strategists were expecting confrontations between soldiers and Mohawks where each would carry an automatic or semi-automatic weapon.

Barricades

The soldiers would have had easy access to tear gas, smoke bombs and pepper spray, according to the wishes of the high commander of the operation. Four years after the Oka crisis, soldiers from Valcartier, Gagetown and Petawawa were thus trained to assault barricades.

The documents reveal that the soldiers perfected the art of using 66 millimeters rockets and of handling M-67 type fragmentation grenades.

From February 14 to 25, 1994, soldiers from the 5th Mechanized Group of Canada and from the Royal Canadian Regiment also learned to build trenches and erect road blocks to surround a territory. RCMP personnel took part in some training activities.

In the air

From February 28 to March 4, 1994, Squadron 430 of Valcartier was trained to fly helicopters below power lines. They also did exercises of shooting while flying at 100 feet above the ground.

The plan made provisions for an agreement with the Federal Minister of Transports to allow the army to fly over the three reserves targeted without restrictions.

Two of the three reserves had small civilian planes, but also weapons likely to cause heavy damage, according to a (then) secret report: 50 calibre "snipers," caliber M-60 weapons, grenades, light anti-tank artillery, plus the usual AK-47.

The risk was so high that the project was aborted in the fall of 1994

The invasion of the three Mohawk reserves by police and army was becoming so risky that the operation was cancelled in late 1994.

The plan of the SQ, the RCMP and the Canadian army was brought short because of (well-founded) rumours about the military operation circulated by the media, in addition to a radical lowering of the tax on tobacco.

According to a service note from the Headquarters of the National Defence dated June 29, 1994, obtained through the Access to Information Act, "information available to date and our knowledge about the plan of the police indicate that it is appropriate from now on to lower the level of alert."

The note specified that the National Defence and the police forces continued to exchange information, but that decreased tension in the reserves no longer justified an armed intervention.

Peaceful struggle

It must be said that the governments resorted to drastic means to make life miserable for contraband without using force.

One week prior to the start of the intensive military exercise involving 1,500 soldiers, Prime Minister Jean Chretien announced an immediate tax reduction of 5\$ per cigarette carton.

The provinces followed course. This was a solid blow to contraband, made less attractive because of the reduced prices.

The Chretien government also doubled the number of RCMP and customs agents in charge of preventing the illegal commerce of tobacco, alcohol and firearms. This initiative gave rise to some spectacular arrests in the Montreal area and the seizure of millions of dollars.

Invasion of the three Indian reserves already prepared in spite of denial by federal and provincial authorities

Documents obtained by the Journal de Montréal revealed that at least 5,500 heavily armed policemen and soldiers were put in a state of alert to invade the three Mohawk reserves of Kahnawake, Kanasatake and Akwesasne in February 1994.

According to the 1,599 pages of documentation obtained through the Access to Information Act, more than 1,500 Canadian soldiers had followed intense training for the possible invasion of the three Aboriginal reserves, with 24 to 72 hours notice.

A powder keg

In fact, the Montreal region was sitting on a powder keg all through the first half of 1994: Mohawks armed to the teeth had announced they would retaliate with force to any aggression by police or army.

An internal note from the National Defence Department dated February 14, 1994 stated: "It is possible that the Canadian Armed Forces are called upon to assist the civil authorities or to provide armed assistance to the RCMP in the struggle against contraband, mainly in Quebec or Ontario, with little notice."

The documents obtained by the Journal de Montreal demonstrate that the federal and provincial governments lied; they had always denied persisting rumours of an invasion of the Aboriginal reserves.

SQ, RCMP and army planned an unprecedented operation to put a term to the contraband of cigarettes, alcohol, firearms and illegal aliens by the Mohawks. According to the documents obtained, SQ and RCMP would lead an offensive strike and be the first to invade the three reserves. The army would then follow quickly to "secure" the Aboriginal territories.

According to our information, 2,000 SQ agents and the same number of RCMP personnel would have taken part in the operation. More than 1,500 soldiers from the three bases were trained.

Soldiers from Valcartier would have entered Kahnawake on the south shore of Montreal; those from Gagetown, New Brunswick, would have struck Kanesatake (Oka); and the soldiers from the Ontario base of Petawawa would have invaded the Akwesasne reserve, which spreads over Quebec, Ontario and the State of New York, south of Cornwall.

Those three tactical groups could rely on ten bases scattered across Canada for extra weapons, combat vehicles or personnel.

Indeed, the plan anticipated recourse to two infantry companies, four combat units and a tactical group per reserve "to make some show of force during the initial deployment."

The strategists of SQFT, the Quebec Sector of the Terrestrial Forces, chosen to command the operation, had planned to deploy the armed forces during the night. They would have arrived by road, rail and air, using helicopters and Cougar, Husky and Grizzly armoured vehicles.

One of the possible HQs of the operation was situated at Château-du-Lac, at exit 17 of west-bound highway 20, in what used to be the former head office of Septa Rail.
So many leaks that no one knew what to invent to keep the secret

The planned invasion of the three Mohawk reserves was a total failure as far as public relations were concerned. There were so many leaks to the media that the police and the army did not know what to invent to keep the plan a secret.

"Because of existing censorship, we are in a situation where we have to either avoid the media altogether or lie about the state of our preparations," indicated an internal note dated February 1994 from the Headquarters of the Quebec Sector of the Terrestrial Forces.

The tension was at its peak when, on February 4, RCMP representatives tried to reassure the three Mohawk Chiefs in a meeting held in a Dorval hotel. The Aboriginal chiefs came out of that meeting even more worried!

"Transparency has always been the key to the success of the military in the eyes of the public. [...] The credibility of the military has suffered, for it looked as if we were trying to hide something," said Captain J.B.S. Roy, from the Commander Office of the Terrestrial Forces of St-Hubert, in a service note dated June 30, 1994.

"Routine training"

Given the extent of the rumours, Public Affairs of the National Defence Department then agreed to describe the Scorpio-Saxon exercise as "simple routine training." There was of course no intention to confirm the plan to invade the three Aboriginal reserves, explain several internal notes from the National Defence Department, obtained by the Journal de Montreal.

The Mohawks, who were far from reassured, had created a Peacekeeper force in Kanesatake to counter possible "aggression" by the SQ.

Menard

According to the press of November 19, 1994, this moved Public Security Minister Serge Menard to state: "We have no more the intention of invading Kanesatake than of invading Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupre."

More on '94...

Note: Joint Task Force Two is Canada's version of the U.S. Navy Seals or British SAS i.e. the most elite highly trained soldiers Canada has.

“Throughout December 1993 and into early January, senior officials from the Defence department, RCMP and Canadian Security Intelligence Service held a series of strategy sessions to determine the best course of action. By the end of January, a plan had been hatched and Cabinet ministers briefed. Put before them was a sweeping operation that would see an assault force of as many as 800 RCMP officers, backed by several thousand soldiers, take control of the reserves. The RCMP would use four military sites, including CFB Trenton, Ontario, as jumping off points for what was essentially an invasion of native lands.

“Covert reconnaissance and intelligence-gathering missions would be conducted by the military police's SIU Special Operations Branch. In particular, the RCMP needed detailed information on the numbers and types of weapons the Mohawk Warriors might have on hand. JTF2 would be needed to deal with any attacks by natives on key points such as water treatment plants and highways. The unit was told to prepare for multiple native-led terrorist strikes.

“... JTF2 was also informed that the planned RCMP assault was expected to spark country-wide native protests. Military intelligence reports listed a few of the vulnerable areas. For instance, there was potential for natives at the Tyendinaga reserve, east of Belleville, to close down Highway 401, the main transportation artery in Ontario. Mohawk sympathizers might also seize and sabotage a water treatment plant at Deseronto, Ontario, releasing toxic waste in the treatment plant to poison the water system. The same scenario might play out at water filtration and pumping stations near Forest, Ontario.”

Note: This makes no sense. The water treatment plant that “Mohawk sympathizers” were apparently going to sabotage services half of the Tyendinaga Mohawk reserve which borders Deseronto. Why would Mohawks poison half of their own people? Answer: they wouldn't, obviously. But then again, just about every violent claim that the government, police, and military agencies make against the Mohawks and other native people turns out to be bullshit.

“...Other military units across the country, in particular those in Quebec and New Brunswick, were also put on five days notice to move into the volatile areas. The Second Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment (2RCR) was to provide engineers with heavy equipment to smash down Mohawk barricades as well handle crowd control. To do its job, the battalion requested seven M113 armored personnel carriers, 13 heavy machineguns, and large stocks of riot gear including face shields and body armor. The 5e Groupe Brigade Mécanisé du Canada, also part of the assault force, asked for an extra \$4.2 million worth of ammunition. At CFB Petawawa, the First Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment (1RCR) began training for crowd control and dismantling roadblocks. In all, a quarter of the Canadian Army's combat power was at a high state of readiness.

“The mission went by two names: Operation Campus and Scorpion-Saxon. Worried that the news media might find out about the plan, the military decided to call their assault preparations an “exercise.” Canadian Forces public affairs officers concocted a cover story to mislead journalists about

the growing movement of troops around bases in Quebec and New Brunswick. Reporters were told that since some units had let their combat skills slide while on peacekeeping duties in the former Yugoslavia, they needed to take refresher training. A few news agencies didn't buy the story. On February 16, Le Journal de Montreal reported that two artillery units from CFB Valcartier, Quebec, had been placed on standby to support some kind of RCMP operations within the next eight days. The next day, La Presse newspaper reported that troops at Valcartier and CFB Gagetown, New Brunswick, were going to take part in counter-smuggling operations.

“In the end, cooler heads prevailed and Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's Liberals government backed off the assault plan. With the element of surprise lost, Ottawa would try new, more peaceful methods, such as reducing cigarette taxes, to break the lucrative trade in smuggled smokes...”

Letter from Jake Brant, Tyendinaga

January 17, 2004

Re. Kanehsatake

Within the whole of the Mohawk Nation, we have been waiting for such an event. Since the failed Military invasion of our communities in 1994, which included some 6,000 troops and months of training, the Federal Government has been quietly organizing a new strategy to deal with its approach to "organized crime" within all Mohawk communities. The crime that was alleged to have been committed in 1994, and as government suggests, continues to be committed is the manufacturing and sale of "Native Cigarettes". One report suggests the need to "target the Indians' claims to the inherent right of inter-tribal trade with sister Mohawk communities and the native run tobacco manufacturing industry as a whole." It is concluded that the organized aspect to the criminal offence exists because all distributors in Kanehsatake charge the same price of \$25.00 per carton thereby suggesting collusion between proprietors.

The government has successfully transmitted its media message of "law and order" and "organized crime" to the public and they do so at any cost. I sat through a Kanehsatake Police Commission press conference and witnessed a proud Mohawk man give his story on serving his community, as a member of the Police Commission and with no criminal record, and watched him break down when he told us how he had to explain to his children that he was not a criminal. Each of the members recounted similar stories.

I personally recall in Sept/95, reading government propaganda, endorsed by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), that specifically stated, "There is no burial ground in Ipperwash Provincial Park. These people are on the fringe and are not supported by the council for the Band." A few short days later, three Anishnawbe were shot, one fatally, and people who tried to help were beaten. The most severe beating was in-fact reserved for a band council member. Then Minister of Indian Affairs, Ron Irwin, was forced into admitting that there was in fact a burial ground in the park, after proof was presented.

During Gustafsen Lake, supporters behind the lines were presented as terrorists, dissidents, and on the fringe. The public as a whole failed to question the legitimacy of the government reports and allowed for an invasion force to attack and shoot the defenders of the land. A U.S. court however, after being asked to return one First Nations man for trial who was involved, ruled that the people of Gustafsen were engaged in a legitimate and political action to force the government of Canada from power and advance the cause of the people who lived in squalor on Indian Reservations. The court further found that the information relayed to the public at large was not truthful and was only intended to discredit the people involved and to create a feeling or sentiment of lawlessness and imminent peril for the Canadian people as a whole. There was no prospect for a fair and impartial trial and the Canadian request for extradition was refused.

I cite these two examples of struggle to illustrate the ignorance of the general public at that time and their inability to determine fact from fiction. It further illustrates the government's willingness to engage us, even in the most righteous of situations and including those that have been likened to the protection of a cemetery from commercial development.

Today in Kanehsatake, the government propaganda is "organized crime" and "hells angels connection". For us living on Nation lands and within Mohawk communities, this type of rhetoric is laughable. We know that families with children run the convenience stores. In the year 2004, Mohawk people have developed their mental capabilities to be able to establish stores that sell pop, chips, newspapers and cigarettes without mob involvement. There are craft shops, smoke shops, wood shops and others that don't charge taxes on their goods or services and are all perceived as organized crime because they agree collectively not to collect taxes.

There is no lawlessness in Kanehsatake. There are no harleys running up and down highway 344. I would suggest that the recent Barrie, Ontario "Molson's Pot Bust" would not fit in all the basements of the few homes in Kanehsatake. In that situation, I would hardly think that the Barrie chief of police was fearing for his job because he didn't know it was happening right under his nose or that the people of Barrie would have tolerated the city being surrounded by military while every house and person is searched.

The issue at hand is simple. It is an attempt to curb the sale of cigarettes, made by first nations people and industries, and sold throughout first nations communities in every province.

The issue of solidarity and understanding is always difficult, despite the lessons learned from 1995. If good Canadian people are tricked once again by their government, then people in Kanehsatake and elsewhere will be subjected to further despair, intrusion, and violence. That being said, we can all rest assured that some report, sometime in the future, will reveal once again how the government lied to its people and justified its assault on the Mohawk Nation. Perhaps in a few years we can have some speakers come out to a workshop who will speak first hand to the bullshit and injustices that are being faced today by the people of Kanehsatake, but however it may be billed at the time, "Aboriginal solidarity" and Mohawk sovereignty will be determined over the next few days and weeks.

This issue has not concluded. Let us govern ourselves accordingly.
Jake Brant

From: Wii'nimkiikaa (It Will Be Thundering)
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The Kanehsatake Story...

Mohawks Kick Cops Off Rez

On January 12th of 2004, Kanehsata:ke's Grand Chief James Gabriel incited a confrontation when he brought in 67 police officers from other Native communities to take over the Kanehsata:ke Mohawk Police (KMP) force and "crack down on crime". Community residents called it an invasion and responded with force.



Earlier in the week, the news had gotten out that Gabriel had secretly signed a policing deal with the Canadian government in November of 2003, and community residents swarmed the Band Council office to reject the deal and the incoming police force. When James Gabriel's new cops arrived on January 12th, road blockades were immediately set up to prevent nearby Quebec Provincial Police (Surete Quebec - SQ) from also invading.

Community members and masked-up Mohawk Warriors surrounded the Kanehsata:ke Mohawk Police station, using trucks to block the gates of the parking lot. The Mohawk Warrior flag was hung on the fence outside the station and a bonfire was built to keep everybody warm.

"In 2003, U.S. President George W. Bush deployed 113,000 troops to Iraq, population 27 million, to wage war on international terrorism. On Jan. 12, 2004, the Canadian and Quebec government sponsored a raid on Kanesatake, population 1,500, with 67 armed men. Can someone please tell Canadians why a small aboriginal community warrants an assault force that was proportionally 10 times greater than was deemed appropriate to combat Saddam Hussein?"

(Jane Whelen, Montreal Gazette, Tues. May 11, 2004)

About 20 riot cops assembled and fired two volleys of tear-gas canisters over the fence. The Warriors responded by chucking burning logs from the bonfire at the police. Angry community members moved onto the road and then to James Gabriel's home. The house was set on fire, along with Gabriel's car. At some point, the Grand Chief had fled the reserve.

Community members then returned to the police station and vowed to confine the police to the building until they agreed to leave Kanehsata:ke entirely. When the cops tried to order pizza, it was quickly intercepted and given out to the community members at the bonfire. Some Warriors said that police of any kind are unnecessary in Kanehsata:ke, since Warrior Societies have always fulfilled the role of protecting the people. By the bonfire, one community member explained:

"People are getting frustrated. They're sick and tired of Jimmy endangering their lives. People don't want this SOB back - he's not coming back. As far as we're concerned, he's banished. It's always these secret deals with him. The feds love him because he'll sign whatever they put in front of him - but then, what can you expect? That's Jimmy."

James Gabriel's decision to bring back former Kanehsata:ke cops Larry Ross and Terry Issac, further enraged the community. Both had been previously fired from the KMP because of their conduct, and in 1999 both had been involved in the shooting of Kanehsata:ke Warrior Joe David which left him paralyzed. "These guys are deadlier than the outside cops" asserted one person.

The next day, Kanehsata:ke Police commissioners and the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake negotiated a deal to bring in a joint force of Mohawk "peacekeepers" from Kahnawake and Akwesasne to temporarily take over Kanehsata:ke's police station. James Gabriel's goon squad left the reserve shortly after midnight.

It was soon revealed that the Canadian government had been ready to fund Gabriel with \$900,000 to replace the Kanehsata:ke Mohawk Police and the community-appointed commission that is supposed to control it with a new organization called the "Kanehsata:ke Public Security Commission." The commission would work in partnership with the SQ and RCMP.

The so-called "Band Council resolution" which Gabriel passed in order to bring back Larry Ross and Terry Issac was signed on January 2nd, 2004, a day when government offices and the Mohawk Council of Kanehsata:ke were closed.

February 8th: 2004, about 200 Mohawks from Kahnawake and Akwesasne took part in a solidarity march in Kanehsata:ke, some carrying signs with written slogans like "Iroquois not Quebecois."

February 20th: The Mohawks of the Tyendinaga community showed their solidarity by physically preventing James Gabriel from holding a meeting on policing at the local Mohawk Community Centre. They set up a temporary lodge outside the centre and had a bonfire going all night. More people showed up in the morning to oppose Gabriel, but the ousted Grand Chief didn't show his face.



March 11th: Gabriel signed yet another policing deal with the Quebec and Canadian governments at the Hilton hotel in Laval, behind a wall of riot cops.

March 31st: Schools shut down and Mohawk Warriors gathered outside the Kanehsata:ke Police station as the community prepared for the arrival of Gabriel's newly appointed police chief Ed Thompson and the possibility of another invasion. The station's KMP flag was taken down and replaced with a Warrior flag, but the Warriors left the scene before Thompson finally showed up, all by himself. Over the next few days Thompson proved himself to be a puppet of James Gabriel, and he mostly operated from nearby Oka, while Melissa Montour was the only KMP officer actually patrolling the community.

April 9th: About 20 community members gathered on Highway 344 and blocked Thompson and six of his newly appointed police officers from entering the reserve. Another police officer was turned away the following day.

April 12th: Going on the offensive, community members took over and shut down the Kanehsata:ke Police station and said that it would stay closed, at least until Band Council elections in June. Weapons were removed and given to the Kahnawake Mohawk police force. Residents proceeded to patrol the community, watching for attempted police raids.



April 16th: Arrest warrants were issued for 24 people in relation to the January 12th conflict. Deborah Etienne voluntarily turned herself in the next day, only to be forced to sign release conditions that she not communicate with the 23 other community members on the warrant list or return to her home in Kanehsata:ke. Another community member was arrested in Montreal and given the same conditions.

May 3rd: 40-60 of James Gabriel's cops, decked out in full riot gear, tried to raid Kanehsata:ke. Warriors threw rocks, forcing the police to retreat and abandon a KMP police car. Gabriel and Thompson then called for SQ and RCMP intervention. Mohawks from nearby communities such as Tyendinaga rushed to Kanehsata:ke to show solidarity and assist in preventing a full-scale siege. At the same time, the community was hit with the news of Joe David's death.

May 5th: Masked Warriors set up camp on both sides of Highway 344 to prevent a joint intervention by the SQ, RCMP, and Gabriel's cops. SQ cars are being allowed to drive through the reserve on the highway, as they usually do, but not to patrol or intervene in the community.

May 8th: the 24 Kanehsata:ke Mohawks on the warrants list appeared in court in St. Jerome. James Gabriel was represented by Francois Briere, who was the prosecutor against Ronald "Lasagna" Cross and other Mohawk Warriors after the 1990 Oka Crisis.

The judge ruled that nine of the accused could return home on the condition that they not wear masks, carry weapons or communicate with James Gabriel. Conditions preventing three of the accused from returning to their homes were upheld.

May 28: 4 police cars were set on fire outside the KMP station.

June 9: Joseph Day turned himself into the police after a warrant had been issued for his arrest in connection with the fire that burned James Gabriel's house in January. Day is charged with 'intentionally or recklessly causing damage by fire or by explosion.' He was released from custody and will appear in court in the week of June 14.

June 11, 2004: The KMP station was set on fire, and put out by the fire department within the hour.

James Gabriel released a statement condemning the fire as,

"Another deplorable criminal act which under-lines the necessity to restore law and order quickly in Kanesatake," And he promised "...to meet in the territory with the Kanesatake Mohawk Council Chiefs to over-come our differences and agree on the fundamental conditions needed to hold an open and fair election. ... We must work together to let the people of Kanesatake choose the Grand Chief and Chiefs free of any fears or threats..."

Cutting through the Crap

Throughout the recent conflict, the corporate media played their usual role in trying to cover-up the real reasons behind the struggle, to confuse and divide the people, to portray Warriors as apolitical criminals, and to convince the public that this was merely an internal dispute between Kanehsata:ke community members. The same tactics were used during the Oka Crisis of 1990, as they'd been used for years before then.

Cigarettes and marijuana have always been used as a smokescreen by the corporate media and their masters to divert attention from the legitimate struggle of the Mohawk people for their land and freedom. As some community members have pointed out, the cigarette trade has actually lowered the crime rate in Kanehsata:ke, since people now have a source of income.

For many traditionalists, the cigarette trade is a matter of self-sufficiency and economic survival. Mohawk involvement in the tobacco trade is hundreds of years old. Tobacco is an indigenous product which the European colonizers appropriated. Massive federal and provincial taxes on cigarettes have also contributed to smuggling.

Cigarette "smuggling" through the Akwesasne reserve, which is cut in half by the Canadian-American border, has been used by Canada as an excuse for police raids and harassment. Akwesasne has been ecologically destroyed by aluminium smelters and other industrial developments which have poisoned the land and caused birth defects amongst the people, leaving the cigarette trade as one of the only ways to make a living.

The ongoing conflicts on Mohawk territory, including Kanehsata:ke, are the result of more than 500 years of colonization and resistance. The authorities are trying to hide this fact in order to discourage the kind of radical solidarity that made the 1990 stand-off at Kanehsata:ke a "crisis" for Canada's ruling elite.

The Mohawk Nation has been a major thorn in the side of the Canadian government, because the armed resistance of the Mohawk people has exposed Canada as a colonial state and has awakened the Warrior spirit in indigenous peoples across the country.

No other Indian nation within Canada has engaged in armed resistance as often as the Mohawks, and no other nation has been able to maintain police "no-go zones" for as long as they have.

The fighting spirit of the Mohawks, and their ability to forcibly retain independent control of their territory is completely unacceptable to the governments of Canada and Quebec.

The Sovereign Mohawk Nation

The traditional Mohawks have always maintained their sovereignty; their independence. They rightly view Canada as an occupying state that has oppressed the Mohawk people through hundreds of years of genocide and assimilation. A major part of this process was Canada's imposition of the Band Council system.



Grand Chiefs, band Councils and police forces are not a part of traditional Mohawk culture, but were created and implemented by Canada as a way to manipulate and control the people.



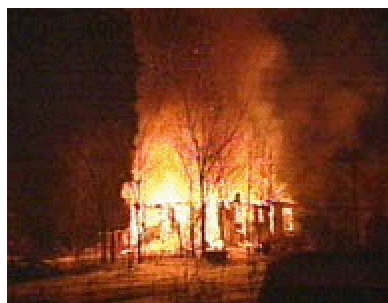
With this understanding, it is easy to see that "corruption" is, in fact, "business as usual" for Chiefs and Band Councils, since they are funded by the Canadian government to manage Native communities and deter resistance to corporate expansion.

The traditional Mohawk form of community organization is the Longhouse, and it is maintained to this day as an independent forum of the people, and an alternative to participation in the Canadian Band Council system.

Women have been at the forefront of Mohawk struggles for self-determination. Traditional Mohawk culture is matrilineal; meaning that women hold a position of influence and respect within Mohawk society and pass this on to their children. Traditionally, if a Chief ever lost the esteem of their people, clan mothers could remove the offending Chiefs, and this removal was considered a permanent disgrace.

James Gabriel's Regime and his KMP Militia

James Gabriel had already been ousted from the community once before, in December of 2001, when he was voted out of office. Residents were fed up with Gabriel funneling money into policing while education and social programs were left out to dry.



In May of 2002, a group of 15 Kanehsata:ke women prevented Gabriel from returning to his position in the Band Council, despite a federal court order to reinstate him. But Gabriel finally slimed his way back in and got back to work making trouble, signing secret deals with his buddies in the

governments of Canada and Quebec

Gabriel's use of the KMP as his personal militia has been a constant source of tension in the community.

On June 5th of 1999, Kanehsata:ke cops Larry Ross and Police Chief Terry Issac, were involved in the shooting of Joe David, a traditionalist and sovereigntist who was among the Mohawk Warriors who defended Kanehsata:ke in 1990 and was one of the last holdouts in the Onentokon Treatment Center.

Joe had told a kid riding a four-wheel vehicle to get off his property, and the kid complained to the police that Joe threatened him. The KMP used this as an excuse to lay siege to Joe's home.

Joe had always maintained that the establishment of the KMP was in conflict with the traditional Mohawk way of life. He was also considered to be a "squatter" on his own territory by the Band Council and the police, since he had moved into one of the 73 empty houses on the reserve, along with many other Mohawks.

Larry Ross in particular, pushed for an assault on Joe's home, while the other cops wanted to wait it out and negotiate. Ross was well known for his hostile attitude towards Warrior Societies, which he referred to as "organized crime syndicates", and he stated that he would "get rid of the Warriors."



Joe "Stone Carver" David

-1957-

May 3, 2004

(photo: Eastern Door. vol. 8. no. 20 June 11, 1999)

Ross ended up shooting Joe David in the back, paralyzing him.

James Gabriel has also been continuously trying to negotiate away Mohawk sovereignty. On March 27th of 2001, the Canadian government passed Bill S-24, ratifying an "Agreement with Respect to Kanasatake Governance of the Interim Land Base" between the Band Council and the Canadian government, which was negotiated throughout the year 2000. Fewer than half of the 1,000 eligible voters in Kanehsata:ke took part in the ratification vote. The final tally was 239 votes in favour and 237 opposed, with ten spoiled ballots. Despite this, the agreement passed by a "majority".

Traditional Mohawks let it be known that they would continue to oppose the deal.



In September of 2001, Kanehsata:ke and Mi'kmaq cops, lead by Larry Ross, raided the home of former Chief Robert Gabriel, executing a search warrant for drugs. At the same time, 100 SQ officers and a SWAT team arrested Robert Gabriel in Montreal. No charges were laid against him and no drugs were found in his home. Instead, police removed a safe from Robert's home which contained documents that he was using in a complaint he had filed against Grand Chief James Gabriel in March of 1999.

In the days after the raid, the vehicle of KMP spokesman Bobby Bonspiel was firebombed, gunshots were fired into the KMP station, forcing all the officers to flee to a nearby SQ station in Oka, and trees and power lines were cut down to blockade roads. Larry Ross was fired from the KMP in a unanimous decision by the Mohawk Council of Kanehsata:ke. Grand Chief James Gabriel defended

Ross, but the community warned that there would be a war if he was not removed.

Ross had been previously fired from the Akwesasne police force because he was too "trigger-happy". Before that he had been "honourably discharged" from the American army after participating in the first American war on Iraq. Ross boasted that he had "engaged the enemy".

Robert Gabriel's complaint in March of 1999 related to James Gabriel's hiring of a known felon, Richard Walsh. Allegedly, Walsh was hired to act as an undercover agent, to find anything that could be used to discredit Robert Gabriel, in case he ran against James in the upcoming election. James Gabriel released a communiqué to the community, explaining his side of the story. In it he stated that he hired Walsh for an undercover drug operation and paid him about \$74,000 dollars over 14 months.

The policing agreement which created the KMP states that no member of the police force may have a criminal record and no Band Council member may issue directions to the Chief of Police or KMP officers.

Richard Walsh had, in fact, been arrested in Kingston, Ontario, for a "breach of recognizance" issued by the Ontario Provincial Police in Pembroke.

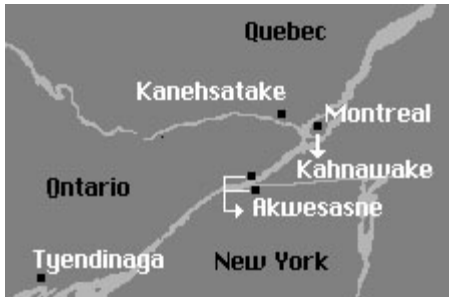
The arresting officers found on Walsh a KMP badge, emergency vehicle headlights, hand-cuffs, a police duty belt with baton and pepper-spray, and a stolen credit card. He was subsequently charged with "impersonating a police officer" in Ontario Provincial Court. Despite all this, an SQ investigation decided not to lay charges against James Gabriel for hiring Walsh.

On March 28th of 2003, Mohawk Warriors began to block one lane of traffic on Highway 344, in anger at a new policing agreement James Gabriel had signed with the Canadian government. The agreement was signed in secret, without the Band Council's knowledge or involvement, and it authorized Cree and Mi'kmaq police officers to patrol the community.

On March 31st the Warriors expanded the blockade to both lanes of the highway, demanding that all non-Mohawk police officers leave the community. On April 2nd, the Department of Indian Affairs agreed to a meeting on the issue and the blockade came down, but the meeting did not resolve the conflict.

The Chiefs that came before James Gabriel were just as corrupt and despotic.

In 1976, Kanehsata:ke Chief Hughie Nicholas, used a little-known section of the Indian Act to abolish regular elections, public meetings and the posting of the Band membership list. He declared Kanehsata:ke a "custom band" and himself and his council as "hereditary". He also decided that his position was a lifetime appointment. Traditional people of the Longhouse boycotted the elections, because to vote was to surrender their sovereignty as a nation and to conform to the Indian Act. In 1986, a Kanehsata:ke community group managed to oust Nicholas.



Report from Kanesata:ke

JUNE 2004

The events in Kanehsatake of the last six months have proven to be very confusing and difficult to explain to those people not living within the territory. This question has been posed to me on numerous occasions. This will be the first time that I provide a written response to it.

Q: "In 1990 there was cross continental support and solidarity for the actions occurring in Kanehsatake, why is there so little support with what is going on currently?"

Arihwakehte:

(Arihwakehte is a Kanehsatake Mohawk. He has been staying at a support camp at Kanehsatake and has been releasing independent media reports about the police conflicts.)

What makes this crisis different --in terms of support and solidarity-- is the amount of negative misinformation and smear campaigns on the part of a Canadian government funded public relations firm and that the parties involved are both members of indigenous communities. Needless to say there is a great deal of confusion about the realities of the situation here in Kanehsatake. The public relations (PR) firms would have the public believe that the crisis in Kanehsatake is one of criminals hijacking control of the community from the duly elected leader James Gabriel. Gabriel who is portrayed like a sort of Elliot Ness who is fighting a war on crime and drugs and that this criminal element has ties to organized crime, etc., this however could not be further from the truth.

What makes this crisis so different from 1990 is that the media through highly orchestrated media spin has painted all Kanehsatake residents collectively with the same paintbrush-as criminals. Kanehsatake like any other community has criminal activity-no more no less-the media through Gabriel and Canada's PR firm have made Kanehsatake out to be Sodom and Gomorrah. The stories that don't get reported-at least not as often or loudly-is the corruption on the part of James Gabriel or the brutality of his police. In 1990 the lines were clearly drawn, indigenous people fighting colonial governments and defending their lands. In 2004 the struggle is very similar with some noted exceptions, namely the players in the game. In 1990 there were non-indigenous police and military on one side and indigenous warriors on the other.

Now however the images and stories coming out of Kanehsatake are Indigenous "criminals" fighting to defend their criminal interests against Indigenous police and "leadership". The real fight in Kanehsatake is the defense of the community against brutal policing and band council corruption secret deals that undermine Indigenous rights.

Since the inception of the Kanesatake Mohawk Police (KMP) in 1997 there has been a series of incidents of police brutality and abuse of authority on the part of the KMP under the direction and sanctioning of James Gabriel. In the first two years of the KMP's existence there was a high level of

community acceptance as well as pride in the establishment of this police force. However, this relationship quickly began to fade when certain members of the KMP began to employ heavy handed policing techniques against community members, such as using batons, pepper spray and stun guns instead of dialogue and negotiations.

On July 15th 1999 the KMP's use of violence came to a head with the shooting and crippling of Joe David. Immediately the shooting of Joe was deemed politically motivated by community members including the family and friends of Joe. Especially emphasized by Larry Ross' publicly professed hatred for members of the Mohawk Warrior Society.

On numerous occasions the KMP conducted raids on community members homes. In one particular incident the residence of Harvey Nicholas was targeted. The KMP broke down Harvey's unlocked doors and shot at him while he was still sleeping in his bed unarmed. The raid netted approximately 10 immature marijuana plants, subsequently the case against Harvey was thrown out of court due to the abuse of authority and the excessive use of force by the KMP.

In Jan./04 James Gabriel subverted the authority of the Kanehsatake Mohawk Police Commission (KMPC) by secretly hiring 67 police including Larry Ross and Terry Isaac. The operation was to remove the former chief of police Tracey Cross and to conduct a massive raid on the community to search for marijuana, firearms and to shut down the cigarette stores operating in Kanehsatake.

In reality the operation was to secure James Gabriel's political power by using these police as a instrument to criminalize his political opponents, Gabriel publicly stated that he wanted to "cut off the head of the opposition". The operation was funded by the Solicitor General of Canada in cooperation with the RCMP and received \$900,000 dollars to buy assault rifles, tear gas, and body bags.

Canada could now have its dirty work done by Indigenous police instead of the RCMP or Quebec's police force the Surette du Quebec (SQ) By having Indigenous police carry out assaults for them.

The Canadian government is able to play off the crisis as an internal problem and not one of an external police force assaulting an Indigenous community as was the case in 1990 and again in 1995 in Gustafson Lake BC. Right from the beginning of the crisis-unlike the 1990 crisis-the media spin was immediate and what was being said was that a handful of criminals was holding the community hostage. The fact that the real intention of the January 12th operation was to undermine the KMPC and remove Tracey Cross as the KMP chief of police was down played by the media under the guidance of Canada and Gabriel's PR firm.

Once Gabriel's house was burnt by a very small group of men who acted on their own, an action that was condemned by the community. All the attention has been focused on this one event and all the other contributing factors have been negated even though they hold importance in understanding the situation in Kanehsatake.

The residents of Kanehsatake fully understand the frustrations felt by those individuals who took their anger out by burning Gabriel's house.

Kanehsatake community members as well as the KMPC were able to have a peaceful resolution to the

crisis of January 12th and 13th by having police from Kanehsatake's sister community Kahnawake come and assume interim police duties.

On January 2nd-a legal holiday-Gabriel and his supporters on council secretly created a new policing agreement called the Tripartite Policing Agreement (TPA) with Canada and Quebec. The TPA calls for the abolishment of the existing legally recognized and sanctioned Kanehsatake Mohawk Police Commission (KMPC) with the Kanesatake Public Security Commission (KPSC).

What makes the two different is that the KMPC is comprised entirely of community members who put in their applications and are selected by committee. The KPSC on the other hand has Gabriel and the band councilors holding the policing portfolio Clarence Simon, at its head and the three other commissioners are the directors of welfare, health, and education --all Gabriel supporters.

The TPA gives Gabriel total control over policing and this agreement also allows non-Kanehsatake residents to sit on the KPSC, furthermore the TPA allows police to be commissioners on the KPSC. The KMPC is a civilian commission that acts as a buffer and a liaison between the band council and the KMP and the community and the KMP.

The gig is up

Ex-Minister Chagnon rips 'illegal' Mohawk raid

Lays blame for debacle on Ottawa

Former grand chief Gabriel made power play with 'mercenaries' hired with federal funds

Jeff Heinrich

The Gazette

Friday, January 13, 2006

It's been two years since a botched police operation by 67 aboriginal police officers in Kanesatake left the grand chief's house in flames and his Mohawk community in tatters.

Now the man who was Quebec's public security minister at the time says the raid was illegal, Duplessis-like, mercenary and the fault of Ottawa, which paid for it.

Jacques Chagnon said he personally blames the then-grand chief James Gabriel and then-solicitor-general Wayne Easter for the January 12, 2004 operation.

"It was a totally illegal, right along the line," Chagnon, Liberal MNA for Westmount, said during an hour-long TV interview Wednesday night at his home in Boucherville, parts of which were aired yesterday on Radio-Canada.

Ottawa, and in particular Easter, should never have authorized a \$900,000 special anti-crime subsidy to Kanesatake's band council that made the operation possible, Chagnon said.

The federal government should have heeded the advise of the RCMP and Surete du Quebec at the time, which said the raid would be a big mistake, he said.

And, Chagnon added, he would never have approved the transfer of aboriginal officers - "mercenaries," he called them - from reserves across Quebec to take part in the Kanesatake raid.

In the end, the heavily armed officers and special constables got nowhere. They stayed in the Kanehsatake police station for 36 hours, as a crowd of residents opposed to Gabriel and the operation kept watch outside. The stand-off was diffused when the police were escorted out by Kahnawake Peacekeepers on January 14.

At the time, Chagnon was criticized for appearing to cave in to demonstrators, some of whom were convicted criminals with histories of violence. Yesterday, he said he "paid the price": He was demoted from Jean Charest's cabinet last March.

Put on trial last fall for rioting and forcibly confining the officers, several of the demonstrators were convicted and are awaiting sentencing Jan. 20 in St. Jerome.

Chagnon told journalist Alain Picard he thinks Gabriel was trying to establish "absolute power" by the operation, whose goal was to replace then-chief of police Tracey Cross with one of Gabriel's allies, former police chief Terry Isaac.

That blend of politics and policing smacked of the Duplessis era, Chagnon said. Though the media made Gabriel into a "martyr saint" after his house was burned down, the Mohawk leader's actions were something else, Chagnon said.

"He pulled off a tour de force, getting himself armed by the federal government, using totally illegal methods to bring in an army of mercenaries ... into the territory to replace his chief of police," Chagnon said.

Radio-Canada intends to air further excerpts of the Chagnon interview today.

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Mohawk leaders fuming
Chagnon upbraided. Remarks by ex-minister on raid called 'malicious'

DEBBIE PARKES, The Gazette
Published: Saturday, January 14, 2006

Angry Kanesatake band councillors say former Quebec public security minister Jacques Chagnon should learn to hold his tongue instead of making "malicious" and "provocative" statements.

They were complaining about Chagnon's characterization of 67 aboriginal police officers who took part in a botched 2004 raid in the community as "mercenaries" and descriptions of the raid as illegal.

Those comments, made in an hour-long TV interview, were aired Thursday.

In another segment aired yesterday, Chagnon said the quantity and firepower of the guns and ammunition the officers had - including, he said, anti-tank weapons - were enough "to start a war, almost." He also said it was all "completely aberrant" for the community of 1,300 people west of Montreal.

"While rewriting history, (Chagnon) makes provocative comments that reopen wounds in the Mohawk community of Kanesatake at a time when the chiefs on council are initiating a mediation process with Grand Chief Steven Bonspille to restore a long-lasting peace," the councillors said in a statement.

Notably, Bonspille - the only member of the current council who was not allied with former grand chief James Gabriel during last summer's election - wasn't among the issuers.

"Mr. Chagnon can say what he wants," Bonspille said. "It's a free country. For my part, I believe the RCMP should do an investigation based on what Mr. Chagnon is now saying."

Bonspille acknowledged he's irritated the council chiefs issued the statement without consulting him. Still, "I'm not going to speak against my council at all. We're working together to make Kanesatake a better place."

In the TV interview, Chagnon blamed Gabriel and then solicitor-general Wayne Easter for the botched raid Jan. 12, 2004, by aboriginal police officers hired from reserves across Quebec.

Chagnon also said he couldn't understand how the heavily armed officers could be held at bay by a couple of dozen unarmed demonstrators.

"It was the first time in Canada that we faced a situation in which the hostages were armed," he said dryly.

"They didn't dare leave the police station. Why? What were they afraid of?"

Jeff Heinrich of the gazette contributed to this report

From: Wii'nimkiikaa

<http://itwillbethundering.resist.ca/>

The Mohawk Warrior Tradition

Unlike some indigenous nations within Canada, the Mohawks were able to maintain their Warrior Societies and traditions. Since the beginning of the colonization of North America, the Mohawks have defeated numerically superior enemy forces through the use of guerrilla warfare tactics.

In 1759, 1,000 Warriors of the Six Nations Confederacy (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora) and 4,000 British soldiers, defeated 9,000 French troops in open battle. During the war of 1812, 600 Mohawks defeated 7,000 American soldiers, defending Kahnawake. Less than half of the soldiers returned to the U.S. alive. In Upper Canada (now Ontario), 1,000 Mohawks and other indigenous warriors defeated 10,000 American troops and drove them back into the U.S.

Warriors Societies began to reform in the early 1970's, with women playing a prominent part, as they demanded to participate in the traditional War Dance and to carry weapons in armed confrontations.

Louis Hall, whose Mohawk name was Karoniaktajeh, was a major source of inspiration to the resurgent Warrior Societies of the 1970's. He designed the Mohawk Warrior flag, wrote the Warriors Hand Book, and was involved in the 1974 Moss Lake occupation. As a supporter of traditional armed Mohawk resistance to colonization he rejected the Handsome Lake version of the Great Law of Peace, since Handsome Lake was a Quaker and a pacifist. Hall maintained that the Great Law of Peace only prohibited the use of weapons between the nations of the confederacy, but did not forbid defence against outside enemies such as the governments of Quebec and Canada.

A History of Mohawk Resistance to Invasion

"To fight any kind of war one needs courage, gumption, knowledge of the enemy and strategic planning. The biggest single requirement is fighting spirit. People with fighting spirit shall not become casualties of a psychological warfare." (Karoniaktajeh ,Louis Hall, The Warriors Hand Book)

In 1968, Mohawks in Akwesasne took over the Seaway International Bridge in a struggle against a government decision to levy customs duties on goods. RCMP and OPP officers stormed the bridge and arrested 48 people. The 1793 Jay Treaty between the U.S. and Britain secured the right of the Mohawks to take goods across the border, but Canada refuses to recognize it.

Stanley and Loon Island were reoccupied in 1970, and in 1973, Kahnawake Warriors deployed weapons for the first time in recent history during a confrontation with the SQ that broke out after White settlers were evicted from houses on the reserve. SQ patrol cars were flipped over, and armed women Warriors took part in the conflict.

In May of 1974, Mohawk men and women occupied an abandoned camp at Moss Lake in New York State. They named it Ganienkeh - The Land of the Flint - the traditional name for the Mohawk homeland (The Mohawks call themselves the Kanienkehaka - People of the Flint). An armed stand-off began,

involving hundreds of state police. The stand-off wound down after a few years of negotiations with New York State and the Mohawks exchanged Moss Lake for land near Altona, just south of the Canadian border. Ganienkeh was retained as the name for this land, liberated from the colonizer.

In 1979, Kahnawake Mohawk David Cross was shot and killed in his driveway by an SQ officer. The SQ were subsequently barred from entering Kahnawake, and the reserve essentially became a police "no-go zone."

This provided a safe haven for Mohawks with arrest warrants. Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien commented on the situation in 1994, saying "There will be no refuge for criminals. No-go areas are not acceptable in Canada" (Globe and Mail, Feb. 9/94)

In June of 1988, 200 RCMP officers raided six cigarette stores in Kahnawake, using helicopters, riot squads and semi-automatic weapons to arrest 12 people and seize \$450,000 worth in cigarettes. In retaliation, the Kahnawake Warrior Society seized the Mercier Bridge for 29 hours. The blockade was lifted when the provincial & federal governments agreed to negotiations on the cigarette trade.

In early March of 1990, roadblocks and gun battles erupted between factions for and against cigarette smuggling and gambling on the Akwesasne reserve. Those opposed to smuggling and gambling were primarily Christian Mohawks and supporters of the Band Council, and they repeatedly requested police intervention in the matter, but after 33 days they were driven off in a gun fight. On May 1st, two Mohawks were killed in the conflict, including one Mohawk opposed to smuggling and gambling and a Warrior who mostly supported it. Subsequently, 400 Ontario police and RCMP officers, along with Canadian Armed Forces soldiers, New York State Police and U.S. National Guard troops invaded and occupied the reserve.



On March 10th of 1990 the Mohawks of Kanehsata:ke occupied the Pines (traditional lands on which the people's cemetery is located) to oppose the Municipality of Oka's plans to expand an adjacent golf course and to build 60 luxury homes around its perimeter.

The golf course was part of Oka's lucrative tourist industry. For four months the community blockaded a road leading into the Pines, and on July 11th, over 100 members of the Quebec Provincial Police attacked the barricades, opening fire on mostly women and children and firing tear gas and concussion grenades. Members of the Kahnawake and Kanehsata:ke Warrior Societies returned fire. One SQ officer was shot and killed, most likely by "friendly fire."

The wind blew the tear gas back at the SQ and the officers retreated, leaving several police vehicles behind, which Warriors then used to reinforce the barricades. In solidarity, Warriors in Kahnawake seized and blockaded the Mercier Bridge, a vital route into the city of Montreal, threatening to blow it up if Kanehsata:ke was attacked again.

The stand-off would last 78 days. 1,000 police officers and at least 2,650 Canadian soldiers (possibly as many as 4,000) were deployed, with tanks, Armoured Personnel Carriers and helicopters. It was the

largest domestic military operation ever initiated by the Canadian government.



On September 26, the Mohawk defenders decided to move out of the Treatment Centre which the government had confined them to, but not to surrender! The Canadian soldiers were unprepared for this, but attacked and beat-up Warriors, women and children as they struggled to return to their homes. A few defenders actually managed to get past the soldiers, but were then arrested by police. One young Mohawk woman was stabbed with a bayonet by a Canadian soldier.

The Mohawk resistance at Kanehsata:ke sparked solidarity actions across Canada. Road and railway block-ades were set up, Indian Affairs offices were occupied, and sabotage was carried out against railway bridges and electrical power lines.

The potential for even greater and more widespread sabotage helped to effectively limit the government's ability to militarily crush the Mohawk defenders at Kanehsata:ke. The events of 1990 are referred to as the "Oka Crisis" because Canada was on the verge of an Indian uprising.

On January 8th, 1991, residents of Kahnawake clashed with Quebec riot police and drove them off the reserve.

In February of 1992, Ronald "Lasagna" Cross and Gordon Lazore were found guilty of assault causing bodily harm, aggravated assault, and weapons charges relating to the Kanehsata:ke stand-off in 1990. Cross was sentenced to four years and four months in prison, while Lazore was sentenced to one year and 11 months.

They were found "not guilty" of uttering death threats to Canadian soldiers, and charges of "rioting" and "obstruction" were dropped. A third man, Roger Lazore was acquitted of all charges, as were another 34 of the Kanehsata:ke defenders in a separate trial.

On January 21st, 1994, about 60 rounds were fired at two Canadian military aircraft which flew over Kahnawake. When the aircraft landed in a field their crew was approached by residents who informed them that they had been shot at and would have to leave.

Bloc Quebecois Member of Parliament Claude Bachand was kicked out Kahnawake on February 10th of 1994, after going door-to-door asking residents about their attitudes towards "guns and smuggling".

In 1999, a journalist with "Le Journal de Montreal" obtained 1,599 pages of documents through the Freedom of Information Act which described plans on the part of the Canadian government to launch massive raids on several Mohawk communities in 1994. Under the pretence of cracking down on cigarette smuggling, the stage was set for an invasion of 1,500 Canadian soldiers, 2,000 RCMP and 2,000 Sureté Quebec officers. The Canadian military's elite Joint Task Force 2 unit was also to be involved. Training and planning occurred over the course of a year.

The police forces were to lead an offensive strike while the soldiers secured the surrounding areas.

Eventually the plan was trashed when CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service) warned the government of the massive bloodshed the invasion would cause and the possibility of a nation-wide indigenous uprising.