

Mohawk Lands Invaded by Canadian Government over the Expansion of a Golf Course!

Canadian Federal Government Mounts Full-scale Military Invasion of Kanesatake and Kanahwake Mohawk Reserves

In response to the expansion of a local golf course onto ancestral lands, Mohawks began to protest on March 11th, 1990 in the village of Kanesatake (40 km from Montreal). The ownership of their sacred burial grounds has been a matter of dispute between the Mohawk Nation and the Canadian government for more than 200 years. The local government sold the land to developers after the federal government had refused petitions to adjudicate Mohawk land claims since 1956. In response, the village of Kanesatake blockaded a small, local, dirt road leading to the resort community of Oka, where the golf-course was planned. This was done to prevent further usurpation of their lands. The Mayor of Oka obtained an injunction ordering the removal of the road-block, clearly violating treaty agreements. The Mohawks were attacked on July 11 by about 100 well-armed provincial paramilitary police. The Mohawks fought back and in the ensuing gunfire, one of the police officers was found killed in the crossfire. The Mohawks were charged without due process of law, despite their claim that they heard a police radio transmission which revealed that the officer was killed by his own colleagues in their confused retreat.

On the same day, July 11, the besieged Kanesatake Mohawks requested assistance from kindred Mohawks at the nearby Kanahwake Reserve. In support, the people of Kanahwake erected a blockade of the Mercier Bridge which was built on their lands. This effectively blockaded a main commute artery to Montreal, and thereby drew international attention to the situation at Kanesatake.

On April 26th, 1990 the Mohawks at Mercier Bridge offered to open one lane to traffic. In response, government officials walked out of the negotiations, ignoring the offer. The following day, Canada's Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney ordered 4,000 army troops to join the forces already outside the two Indian reserves. Government forces were armed with armored personnel carriers, grenade launchers, rocket launchers and tanks. An attack by the army seemed imminent. Thus a caravan of 60 cars full of women, elders and children made ready to leave Kahnawake. They were searched by police just outside the reserve. While they were being detained, they were attacked and stoned by non-Indian protesters, while the police stood by watching. A child, a mother and an elderly man were taken to a hospital as a consequence of the assault. The elderly man died in the hospital four days after the stoning.

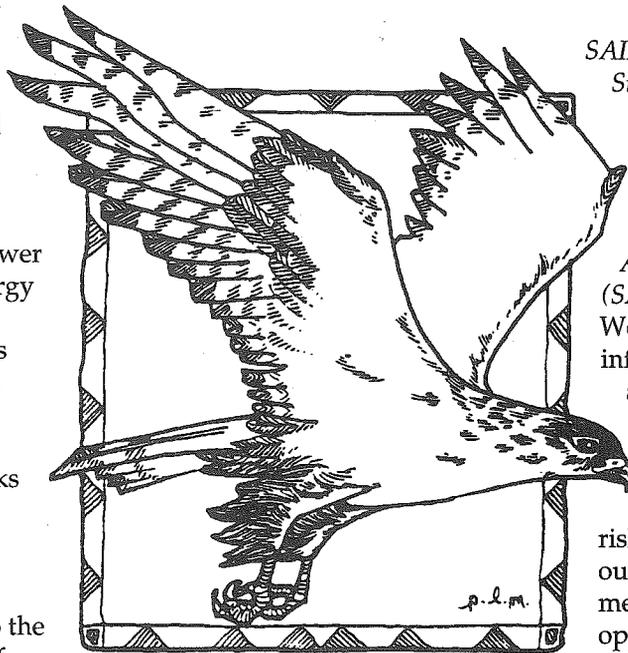
On September third, 1990 the Quebec Police and the Canadian Army forcibly invaded Mohawk lands. Broken ribs, jaws and elbows were reported. About 50 Mohawks retreated into an alcohol treatment center. They held off the confrontation for 11 weeks. Throughout this time the Mohawk Nation presented

the government with proposals for peaceful solutions to the crisis. Yet the government refused to negotiate. The Indians who laid down arms and left the treatment center will be brought before a Quebec judge who will determine whether charges will be lodged against any of them. Mohawks who had been previously arrested came out of jail covered with cigarettes burns. At the sight of burned chests, Canadian judges threw the cases out of court.

Mohawk active resistance to land usurpation comes as a response to repeated and recent losses: they have lost more land since 1950 than in the previous 100 years. Their land has been purchased by the Government and developed with bridges (including the Mercier) and hydroelectric power plants that provide cheap energy to industry. This has meant environmental degradation, as the heavy industry discharges pollutants into nearby rivers, making both farming and fishing unsafe for the Mohawks living on the Kahnawake and Akwesasne reserves.

Thus, Indian's revendications have moved to the larger and present issue of self-determination and the general question of lands rights: over 570 aboriginal land claims, covering more than 1/2 of the Canada land mass, still await settlement. The Government now has a policy of negotiating no more than six claims at a time and made vague promises to accelerate the process. Yet particularly clear and rigid is the Government position on native self-determination. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney declared: "Native self-government does not now and cannot ever mean sovereign independence."

Indian Student Alliance Denounces US Agression in Middle East



SAIIC received the following from the Student Alliance of North American Indians. We at SAIIC wish to express our solidarity with their views.

We, the members of the Student Alliance of North American Indians (SANAI), oppose the war in Iraq. We oppose all acts of aggression inflicted upon Indigenous peoples, and upon all peoples of the world...

The government which is now killing the peoples of Iraq, and risking the lives of millions throughout the world, is the same government which has been killing and oppressing the Indigenous peoples of the Americas for 500 years.

The government and people of the United States took American Indian tribal land by force and trickery, and have never fulfilled their promises to the tribes.

The government and the people of the United States have tried to marginalize American Indian peoples, and ignore our pleas for justice, but when the Army wants bodies for the frontline, we are expected to die first. Second-rate citizens, but first-class cannon fodder.

Throughout our history, we've served, both voluntarily and involuntarily, in every war in which this country has been involved. Yet, the United States continually fails to serve the needs of American Indians in education, in housing, in health care, and basic human rights.

Tribal lands have a long history of being exploited. This exploitation will be intensified because of the need for natural resources. The government and multinational corporations threaten the future of our tribal homelands and the balance of the world...We owe no debt of allegiance to the government.

The Mohawk Nation is asking people to write to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in their support:
Prime Minister Brian Mulroney
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
CANADA K1A 0A6
Fax: (613) 995-1686

For more information about the Mohawk situation, contact:
Mohawk Nation Defense Fund
PO Box 1987
Kahnawake, Qubec
CANADA J0L 1B0