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Editorial

I went to check out the First Nations' International Court of Justice, held at the Radisson Hotel in Ottawa, yesterday. This forum is hearing evidence from citizens of various indigenous nations. This evidence will be used to support an indictment, charging the Queen, and her representatives of the artificial construct commonly referred to as Canada, with crimes against the indigenous peoples.

Oren Lyons was one of the witnesses called to testify before the F.N.I.C.J. What I found particularly interesting was the substantial representation of the so-called "warrior society", the "Mohawk Nation New Service" (M.N.N.S.) and the First Nations Business League (F.N.B.L.), who were also in attendance.

During a break, Oren was engaged in a conversation with two ladies who I happen to know. Suddenly, they were pushed aside by Art Montour, Loran Thompson and their entourage, who announced they had questions for Oren. They proceeded to surround Oren and accost him with a barrage of questions and accusations.

Later in the day, the M.N.N.S. issued a "press release" attacking Mr. Lyons. I will not reproduce the item in its entirety here but, suffice it to say that it contains the usual misinformation and distortions that are the norm for M.N.N.S. releases. But then, journalistic integrity and ethics are not principles that guide this propaganda machine of the "warrior society". You see the M.N.N.S. doesn't report news, it launches personal attacks against people they view as their enemies. These attacks are invariably initiated under the guise of "news" stories.

The lead-in quotes states, "The First Nations International Court of Justice is a good idea, but it is only as good as the credibility of the people involved." Now, none of the quotes contained in this diatribe are attributed to anyone. Also, the M.N.N.S. itself has no credibility, except with their supporters, so I'd be skeptical of any source the M.N.N.S. deems reliable.

But, who are these people? Well, here's a thumbnail sketch.

In 1989, a delegation of so-called warriors, led by Art Montour and Paul Delaronde, attended a meeting of the Onondaga Nation Council. The men announced that they no longer recognized the Rotiianehson of the Confederacy as their representatives. "We no longer recognize you as our leaders," Council was told, "you no longer speak for us." Then, once their message had been delivered, they all got up and walked out of the Onondaga Longhouse, thereby ending all discussion on the matter. What they'd just done was to put themselves outside the protective circle of the Rotiianehson (People of the Longhouse or Iroquois Confederacy). At that moment they became invisible. No longer would

they be seen by their people, nor their voices heard in Council or elsewhere.

On July 11, 1990 - in the Pines of Kanesatake - the "warrior society" used Elders, women and children as their human shields against the police. The media portrayed the people there as innocent victims of an oppressive nation state (true enough). Their case was a noble and honourable one - the protection of ancestral lands from development into a private golf course. The media also painted a picture of the noble warrior - honourable men defending the nation and its citizens. Many people bought into this romantic image.

The public had apparently forgotten that these same "knights in shining armor" - a few months earlier at Akwesasne - had been beating and shooting at their own people in order to defend the operators of gambling houses. The public image of the "warrior society" was badly tarnished as a result of their actions at Akwesasne. The land issue at Kanesatake gave them the perfect opportunity to achieve two main objectives: re-polish their image and consolidate their political control. It is my belief that the gunfight that summer was inevitable. The SQ (Quebec provincial police) wanted to kick some ass and the warriors needed a crisis to rebuild some credibility as defenders of indigenous rights.

Then there was their testimony in court during the trials of the "TC-39", those who held out in the treatment centre before surrendering on September 26, 1990, as well as before the coroner charged with determining the circumstances leading to the death of SQ Corporal Marcel Lemay, killed on July 11, 1990 (an event that has been celebrated by these people every July 11th since then.) During these proceedings, the "warrior society" won a significant legal precedent by having the court allow their witnesses to be sworn in using wampum strings. They then proceeded to violate this sacred ceremony by lying to the judges and coroner.

The First Nations Business League, formerly known as the Iroquois Businessmen's Association, is a consortium of people from several Rotiianehson nations who got their start running tobacco and fuel products. While some of these "business people" may deal in legitimate commodities, others are involved in drugs, tobacco, fuel, alcohol, arms, illegal aliens - anything you can think of. Are these the types of activities we want to leave as a legacy for the future? Are these the tools we want to use in rebuilding our nations? I say no thanks.

When the trade in was in its infancy, and before it reached its pinnacle a few years ago, the Rotiianehson (Chiefs) of the Confederacy foresaw many of the problems we currently face as a result of the activities of unscrupulous members of our society, namely the

First Nations Business League, the "warrior society" and other people who are engaged in questionable activities.

A committee of the Iroquois Confederacy drafted a policy document for the establishment of a trade and commerce commission. The TCC proposed joint regulation of economic activities among U.S., Canadian and Haudenosaunee citizens, by their governments, on a nation-to-nation basis according to existing treaty relations. The proposal was blocked by representatives of the Oneida Nation Council and several Mohawks, all of whom wanted nothing to do with regulation in any form.

Today, there's an unholy alliance between the groups I've outlined above. Their message is clear. They want their economic activities to continue, without any regulation whatsoever so they can monopolize "trade", maximize their profits, and continue to make millions. They've built an empire on the backs of our future generations, by exploiting our collective rights, without distinction as to what activities may be deemed acceptable and those that are undesirable and dangerous.

They have recently escalated their attempts to gain legitimacy, and influence policy to their advantage, through various means. Some have run in band and tribal council elections. Others have taken key positions within these foreign governmental structures. They even tried to meet with the governor of New York State, George Pataki, but they were rebuffed.

They back gambling interests who want to sell out our rights. The federally elected Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and the Mohawk Council of Kanesatake, for instance, have both explicitly adopted foreign laws in order to establish gambling operations in these communities.

We are faced with a choice. Do we want to work towards restoring treaty relations, which were established on the basis of peace, respect and friendship? This is what the confederacy, and the nation councils, have been pursuing. They've been trying to protect our sovereignty, while preserving the principles and values that have been passed on to us by previous generations.

Or do we want to pursue an existence based on isolationism? Do we want to become like the oppressors we resent? Do we want to become citizens of a capitalist state, where a few have all the power and the majority lives in need? Is this what we want our society to be based on? Again, I say, no thanks.

And as for the "warrior society", the "Mohawk Nation News Service" and the First Nations Business League, beware of these devils of deception.

- Kanatiio

