

The Need for a National Defense Establishment

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In time, Kahnawake will inevitably unify under one Mohawk Nation government and the wounds of our divisions will surely heal as all things do in the cycle of nature. Perhaps in our lifetime, we may even witness the unification of the entire six nations. In any case, when this unification is finalized, a new era will begin in our colorful history whereby the Mohawk Nation's next item of concern on its post-unity agenda is to assert its inherent rights, freedoms, and liberties by exercising its sovereign status upon Canada and the United States.

Soon the Kahnawake will have the political ability to accomplish this under a united front. When this era begins, it is without question that the Government of Canada will do everything in its ability to prevent this assertion. From economic sanctions to police state tactics, the Government of Canada will intervene in our affairs once again to suppress our struggle. They have already deployed its army here once and it is feasible to suggest a recurrence the next time our people champion its inherent rights.

In this age of indigenous resistance and reckoning, we witness various attempts from different nations to assert their inherent rights and continue the struggle to rid themselves from colonial endeavors of assimilation and genocide. From Burnt Church to Chiapas, from the Warrior Society to the Zapatistas; the symptoms are apparent that indigenous people want a better life for themselves and their children to come. In our geographic region, this resistance and struggle has been met with ruthless and violent acts by the Government of Canada and its provincial minions. It becomes apparent that if indigenous people are going to continue to proceed in this direction of resistance and assertion, violent acts of aggression will continue to be initiated by the Government of Canada. Therefore it is logical that some type of security network should be established to protect those who commit these acts of assertion on the front lines while the diplomats fight for our rights in the political arena.

With the above analysis appreciated, this author therefore calls for the formation of a central national defense establishment within a unified Mohawk Nation. It should be clarified to readers that this is not a call to arms but a call to service as this establishment's policy would be one of defense and protection only. Never shall this establishment initiate violent aggression with all due respect for the Kahswéntha. It's purpose must be clear that the creation of this security network is not to declare war on Canada and the United States, but to design an outfit that will be prepared for any contingency that threatens the peace of the Mohawk Nation; from insurgence to floods.

For the sake of this commentary, the author shall refer to this suggested organization as a *vanguard*. Indeed, a distinction must be made between the composition of an army and a vanguard. An army, by contemporary reputation, is a large body of citizens who are at times pressed into military service, to either defend against or attack against an enemy in order to consolidate that nation's interests (i.e. US involvement in Vietnam, Iraq, etc.)

Contrarily, a vanguard is strictly a defensive organization that is composed of volunteers who are called upon by their nation into service whenever something threatens its peace. This author suggests that a Mohawk national defense establishment at Kahnawake would be a part-time volunteer organization that only acts upon sanction from the future unified Mohawk Nation Government at Kahnawake.

One possible disadvantage of creating a national defense establishment is the possibility of the vanguard usurping the people's political powers by misusing its strength; thus jeopardizing the people's peace, freedoms, and liberties. In other countries, particularly Latin America, we often see the military used as an instrument of totalitarian governments to consolidate its power by suppressing and ruling over its people with an iron fist. In other cases the military itself may launch a *coup d'état* against its government. These scenarios occur when the military is given far too much responsibility and authority from its government. In the case of the Mohawk Nation, every precaution must be taken to ensure that this never happens.

To combat this possible disadvantage; training is integral. Of course the standard physical martial training would be taught, but its curriculum would be somewhat alternative in comparison to the armies of other countries. In order to create an elite vanguard, a spiritual basis is necessary to develop an individual's discipline and morale; two items that are absolutely imperative in crisis prevention. Volunteers should also be taught from a holistic perspective their duties and responsibilities to our people as well as our mother the Earth. With this indoctrination properly instructed, these volunteers will want to get away from drugs, alcohol, and ultimately free themselves from colonial vices.

When called upon in peacetime, this vanguard would carry out duties that are similar to that of traditional mutual aid societies of the Haudenosaunee. For example, if the event of another ice storm, the vanguard would make sure that firewood was cut and available, that our elders had free access to essentials like food and medical supplies, and any other service that requires some physical manpower. It would act as an emergency preparedness organization planning for any contingency by performing maneuvers that deal with real life scenarios that may potentially threaten Kahnawake and the Mohawk Nation.

This suggestion is probably nothing new, but definitely deserves some serious consideration as we continue the struggle into the 21st century. Perhaps in the future, other nations would follow the Kahnawake example and aim to create a larger alliance of indigenous defensives.

Until the victory, forever!