

The June 21st statement referred to by Mr. Nelson was provided to the Committee by the Department. It states a number of positions that involve implicit assumptions of Mohawk sovereignty. For example, the statement informed the Minister:

- that the Longhouse people of Kanesatake are members of the Mohawk Nation which is a sovereign nation, within the Five Nations Iroquois Confederacy
- that the Longhouse people of the Mohawk Nation are duly represented by their Life Chiefs appointed by the Clans in accordance with the customs and laws of the Mohawk Nation and all discussions concerning the traditional lands of the Mohawk Nation must be conducted by representatives of the Longhouse people
- that no agreement reached between Canada and the Band Council, also known as the Six Nations Traditional Hereditary Chiefs will be binding on the Longhouse people of the Mohawk Nation
- all present and future development on Mohawk traditional lands by non-Mohawks, must be suspended pending agreement on long term and long lasting solutions
- all past development is subject to be reassessed and must come under the jurisdiction of the Mohawk Nation at Kanesatake
- all actions by external levels of government such as the filing of injunctions against the Mohawk Nation and the harassment of Mohawk individuals by police, paramilitary and military force, the municipalities of Oka, Regional Municipal Councils and the Regroupement des Citoyens d'Oka, cease in order that an atmosphere of peace and order be restored to permit meaningful discussion.

In the evidence of the Longhouse People at Kanesatake given on March 12, 1991, the first mention of any discussion about the possible use of arms refers to days around July 5, 1990. In his testimony Mr. Nelson stated that following the June 21st meeting with the federal Minister of Indian Affairs:

We were later informed that your government once again would not acknowledge or deal with the Longhouse people. When word of your government's position got back to the people in The Pines, many were angered. They felt we had tried every possible peaceful and diplomatic way to have Canada take us seriously. They decided that it was time to fight and that the barricades would not come down until Canada relented. Some of us disagreed with this approach because we felt that other peaceful avenues could be explored. We felt that a diverse and flexible strategy designed to capitalize on public support and media coverage was preferable to eliminating all other options, thus making a confrontation inevitable.

A provisional injunction was finally granted in early July [to the Municipality ordering the Mohawks remove the barricades] and daily threats were made to remove the barricades, although once again the Municipality did not try to do so.