

STRENGTH

PEACE

UNITY

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OPEN LETTER

4 Enniskó:wa/March 2015

The Honourable Stephen Harper
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Wa'tkonnonhwerá:ton (Greetings).

We feel compelled to state our concern in regard to the proposed Bill C-51 (the Anti-Terrorism Act).

While it is clear that the Canadian people and their government are concerned with both real and potential incidents of terrorism in Canada, there is also a great fear that the law may be used to brand legitimate protests as acts of terrorism. While we support efforts to combat true terrorism, there is a lack of adequate definition of the term 'terrorism' that could lead to abuses of power.

This is the concern that we share with many other First Nations across the country: that C-51 will allow policing or other agencies to persecute First Nations protesters, regardless of how they conduct themselves. This is especially worrisome because of the well-known fact that First Nations people consider themselves Protectors of the Land. Further to that, there will be great potential to label our people as 'terrorists' when they may, in fact, be simply defending or supporting Aboriginal rights and Title. Our people have spent many years marginalized and deemed 'troublesome.' Only last year Canada passed legislation that basically criminalized the entire Native tobacco trade.

The fast-tracking of Bill C-51 into legislation is, in itself another cause for concern. In its zeal to protect Canada's citizens there is a real danger that Canada's government may fail in its obligation to protect the right to protest and, quite possibly, other personal rights and freedoms.

While the Canadian government feels it is necessary to act, it is always wise to proceed with proper diligence and caution.


The fact that the government is rejecting calls to provide more oversight to accompany new powers that law enforcement agencies will receive is disturbing. While it is understandable that the free world is engaged in a very difficult fight to ensure our collective security. Canada must avoid the temptation to engage in Big Brother-type methods. An oversight process should be seen as both healthy and essential.

We feel that Bill C-51, in its current state, could potentially and perhaps even predictably be used to further oppress our defense of our Aboriginal rights and Title.

We are available to discuss this or any other issue with you. It is through honest and open dialogue that we better gain understanding of each other and, perhaps, together find solutions to the problems that we face.

In Peace and Friendship,

**ON BEHALF OF THE OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL OF CHIEFS
MOHAWK COUNCIL OF KAHNAWÀ:KE**



Chief Lloyd Oronhiakhète Phillips

LP/bm/040315/SHarper

Cc: The Honourable Bernard Valcourt, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
The Honourable Steven Blaney, Minister of Public Safety