



Former Assembly of First Nations National Chief Ovide Mercredi calls for the international community to pursue the eradication of global terrorism through a UN-sanctioned peace conference. Mercredi spoke on the issue of global terrorism at McMaster's University's Health Sciences Building Thursday night as part of the university's 2001 Indigenous Studies Lecture Series.

Mercredi decries armed response to terrorism

Former National Chief calls for international peace conference to address issues of global terrorism and poverty

By Paul Baswick

HAMILTON — Ovide Mercredi has called on world leaders to unite for a international peace conference as a non-violent alternative to eradicating global terrorism.

The former Assembly of First Nations National Chief issued the call Thursday night at McMaster University's Health Sciences Building, where he spoke on the impacts of the Sept. 11 terrorists attacks as part of the school's 2001 Indigenous Studies Lecture Series.

The conference, he said, should be convened within the framework of the United Nations, the organization Mercredi said stands the best chance of bringing hostile nations together to the same table.

"We need the United

Nations to call a special assembly for peace...not a conference of the security council for war. That's not what we need them for," said Mercredi.

He added that such a conference must deal not only with the problem of terrorism itself, but also with the socioeconomic conditions under which violence continues to flourish.

The peace conference was one of several initiatives advocated by Mercredi Thursday which underscore the belief that violence cannot be stopped with further violence.

Among these ideas was a challenge to the Canadian government to shift its involvement in the current US-led action in Afghanistan from a military role to a humanitarian one.

"Tell the Canadian people, the government, to redirect their forces to become humanitarian as opposed to being part of the war effort, so that they can put up tents along the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan and feed people, give them medical attention that they need, make sure the food is there and the supplies are there for the winter."

He said by committing its armed forces to military action in the conflict abroad, the Canadian government has missed an opportunity to set a positive example for other nations.

"Did the Canadian government have to send its army over in full partnership with the American

Continued on page 10