



Press Release

September 24, 2001

Group of 78 urges Security Council to set up special court to try September 11 terrorists

The creation of a special court by the United Nations Security Council has been urged by the Group of 78 as a means to try those suspected of perpetrating the September 11 attacks in New York and Washington.

The Group of 78, marking its twentieth anniversary at an annual meeting in Cantley, Quebec, called on the Canadian government to take an immediate lead in requesting the Security Council to set up an ad hoc tribunal along the lines of the international tribunals set up by the Council to deal with the atrocities in Rwanda and the Balkans. It noted that the International Criminal Court, in whose creation Canada has played a leading part, is not yet fully established.

This special court, the Group said in an open letter sent to Prime Minister Jean Chretien, should be convened under UN auspices and consist both of eminent Islamic jurists as well as other judges. It would have the task of defining the nature of the crime, and of judging the direct or indirect responsibility of those brought before it. The court could be held in an Islamic country.

Canada would be making this as a counter proposal to the Taliban proposal that suspected terrorist Osama bin Laden might be brought before an Islamic court.

A clear time-limit should be established by the Security Council for the ad hoc tribunal to report its judgement, and the Council would then become the body to decide on what further action to take.

Throughout the Group's weekend discussions, which included an opening address from Major-General Romeo Dallaire, there were repeated calls for the United States to refrain from military action, and specifically against civilians, and to put the security crisis in the hands of the United Nations Security Council.

The Group of 78 was formed in 1981 to work toward nuclear disarmament, to reinforce the work of the United Nations and to promote international assistance for Third World development.

Contact: Clyde Sanger. Telephone 613-233-7133.