

Northern Plains TRIBAL NEWS

Published by United Tribes Technical College
3315 University Drive - Bismarck, North Dakota 58504



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ SPECIAL EDITION - JUNE 1999 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Clinton has rare meeting with tribal chairs

by Philip Brasher, Washington, D.C. (AP)

In an unusual White House session, President Clinton and more than a half dozen key administration officials met May 12 with Tribal leaders from the Dakotas and Montana to hear appeals for help with pressing social needs.

The meeting in the White House's Roosevelt Room lasted for more than two hours, and Clinton attended for about 20 minutes, tribal leaders said.

"We had an opportunity to talk about a whole lot of things, the main things being housing, education and health care," said Charles W. Murphy, chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux.

Administration officials were receptive to the tribes' request for significant increases in federal aid, he said.

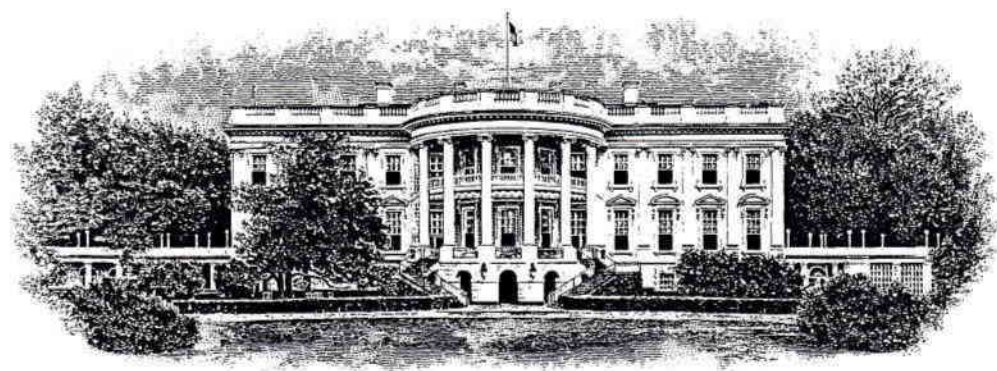
"It probably won't show up until next year's budget," Murphy said.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, Housing Secretary Andrew Cuomo and Education Secretary Richard Riley attended the meeting along with Clinton's chief of staff, John Podesta; the director of the Office of Management and Budget, Jack Lew; and heads of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service.

Some [19] tribal leaders were there, along with Democratic lawmakers from the three states. The meeting was arranged by Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., at the request of tribal chairmen from his state.



President William J. Clinton with Aberdeen Area Tribal Chair Tex Hall, Chairman of the Three Affiliated Tribes of Ft. Berthold, during his meeting with Tribal Chairs from North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana on May 12, 1999 in the Roosevelt Room, White House.





Aberdeen and Billings Area Tribal Leaders meet with President Clinton

Transcript of Clinton Remarks May 13 at Conyers for Congress Dinner U.S. Newswire May 14, 1999 WASHINGTON, -- Following is a transcript of remarks by President Clinton on May 13 at a Conyers for Congress Dinner: BET on Jazz Restaurant Washington, D.C. PRESIDENT.

“Thank you very much. Let me, first of all, thank Bob Johnson and the Whole BET family for making us feel at home at this wonderful place tonight....

“Yesterday -- I will tell you this story in closing. I want to tell you a story. Yesterday, at the request of the senators from North Dakota and Senator Daschle and Senator Baucus, I had a fascinating meeting with 19 tribal chiefs from the 19 Indian tribes of the High Plains [ND, SD, MT, NE] -- the Northern High Plains in America. And all of you who don't know about that part of the country need to know that notwithstanding all the things you read about how rich the Native Americans are because of their gambling enterprises today, the tribes that don't have those gambling enterprises and the tribes that are in the poor, rural areas, a long way from economic activity, are still the poorest people in America.

“And so these very dignified, mostly pretty young tribal leaders, men and women, came in -- we sat in a circle, according to their request, in the Roosevelt Room in the White House -- and they spoke in their turn about the needs of their people. And then after they had done that, the person whom they had designated to be their spokesperson [Tex Hall, Chairman of Aberdeen Area Tribal Chairman's Association and Chairman of Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold], stood up in a very dignified way, and said, ‘Mr. President, we have something to say about our involvement in Kosovo. We know something about ethnic cleansing. We were removed from our land, and some of the people who did it said that it was God's will, which we hear in the Balkans. And we have seen America come a very long way. And we have signed this proclamation to tell you that we, the leaders of the first Americans support America's policy to stand up against ethnic cleansing and the murder of people because of their religious and ethnic background.’

“And then another man said, ‘I would like to be heard’ -- and this young man [Greg Bourland, Chairman, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe], stood up with great dignity -- and he had a beautiful silver Indian necklace on. And he said this -- he said, ‘Mr. President, I had two uncles -- one landed on the beaches at Normandy on D-Day; the other was the very first Native American fighter pilot in the history of the American military. My great great-grandfather was slaughtered by the 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee.’ He said, ‘I now have only one son. America has come a very long way from Wounded Knee to the beaches at Normandy, to the opportunity I have to be in the White House today. And I love my son more than anything, but if he needed to go and fight against ethnic cleansing and the brutality and the murdering of people because of their race, or their ethnicity, or their religion, I would be proud for him to stand for the United States and for the humanity of man.’ (Applause.)

“No one in the room could breathe, we were so moved by this man -- in his simple dignity, representing Americans who still don't have a total, fair shot at educational and economic opportunities; who live in places that still don't have adequate health care. But he told a story that needs to be told ...Thank you, and God bless you.”

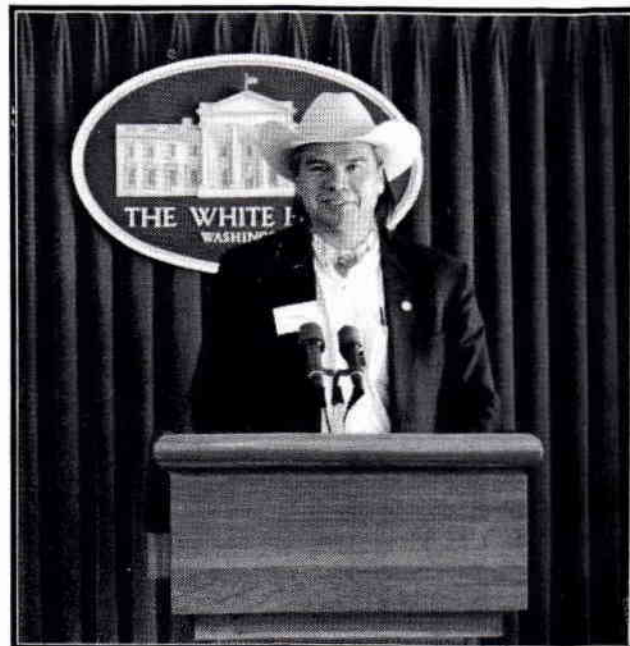
EDITORS NOTE: On May 12, 1999, Elected Tribal Chairs and their delegates met with White House officials and President William Jefferson Clinton for over two hours. The elected leaders presented a Tribal Needs Paper to the White House, covering three of nine key topics.

The paper entitled "A White House Meeting, President William J. Clinton and the Tribal Leaders at the Aberdeen Area and Billings Area" includes (1) Indian Policy, Law and the Future; (2) Health Care; (3) Tribal Housing; (4) Economic Development; (5) Education; (6) Land and Natural Resources; (7) Gaming; (8) Alcohol and Drug Abuse; (9) Other Issues including Discrimination and Cultural Protection.

Senator Tom Daschle (SD) and Senate Minority Leader, gave remarks, as well as views given by other attending members of Congress and the Senate.

President Clinton noted to Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt that he wanted to make a commitment to Indian Tribes from this region during the last two years of his administration.

Chairman Andrew Grey, Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe, offered a prayer and remarks. Chairman Tex Hall led the discussions, providing an overview of "Indian Policy, Law and the Future," followed by presenters of the talking points on behalf of the Tribes. Chairman Richard LaFromboise, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa presented the issues and concerns on Health Care, while Chairman Gregg Bourland, Cheyenne River Sioux, gave talking points on Housing issues, and Chairman Spike Big Horn, Fort Peck Assiniboine Sioux, provided the major issues on Indian Education.



appreciated. These are key to our future in the new millennium.

- The Tribal Nations which comprise the Northern Great Plains and a significant part of the Rocky Mountain Region own the critical land, water, minerals and other natural resources which are key to the future of their own people and the nation. These tribes must be equal partners - especially as it relates to states and federal policy.

- History of Broken Treaties. I mention your efforts first because for more than 125 years before that, our solemn, some would say sacred, treaties were at best ignored, often even in the U.S. Supreme Court, even though under the U.S. Constitution, treaties are suppose to be the supreme law of the land.

- Our nations were here long before the U.S. came into existence. We have existed as sovereign nations for hundreds, if not thousands of years before Europeans decided to make this continent their new home.

- Federal Indian Law of the past and all new laws must be proactively designed to augment growth and maintain protection of tribal governments, while assuring the health, education, and welfare of tribal populations.

- Fort Laramie Treaty. For many of the tribes and nations represented here today, our sovereign status was first formally recognized by our ancestors in the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty. Yet, every one of our current reservations is but a small remnant of the lands that were reserved to us in that and other Treaties. One of the great chiefs of my Tribes, Four Bears, was a signatory to the Fort Laramie Treaty.

- Indian Policy, Law and The Future -

*Tex Hall, Chairman
Aberdeen Area Tribal Chairman's Association
and Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold*

- Thanks for Government to Government efforts. First, Mr. President, I want to thank you for your efforts to put in place a true Government-to-Government relationship with the Indian Nations within the United States. There are 23 tribes which comprise North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and Nebraska. All are treaty tribes. Your Executive Order No. 13084 of May 14, 1998, affirming the government-to-government relationship are greatly

- **Great Sioux Nation Treaty.** Later, in 1868, the great Sioux Nation, of which many tribes represented here are still a part, signed a second treaty with the U.S. Unfortunately, just two years later, that Treaty and many others were treated as if they were not important when Congress passed a law that it would no longer enter into treaties with the Indian Nations.

- **Treaties Broken Forever.** The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 and the Great Sioux Nation treaty of 1868 were broken irretrievably just a few years after that when the Black Hills was opened to settlement by non-Indians - and the people of the Great Sioux Nation had no legal recourse - they also did not have an organization like NATO to protect their interests. In subsequent years, all of the Northern Great Plains Indian Nations were reduced drastically in size by Congressional Act, Presidential decree or by other means.

- **Even the reservations left to us were not completely ours.** To add to the list of how the treaties were broken, even the small reservations left to us were opened for settlement following the so-called surplus lands and allotment acts of the late 1880's. We live on reservations where non-Indians own as much as 60% of the land within the reservation!

- **What would the U.S. have done?** Mr. President, I submit to you that if the U.S. had been victims of broken treaties, if genocide against our citizens had been the policy of a nation bent on conquest, the U.S. would not have put up with it and would have fought back with every ounce of strength its citizens possessed.

- **Money is a poor substitute for lost lands and lost generations.** Mr. President, money is a poor substitute for lost lands and is no substitute at all for the millions of lost lives, losses we continue to suffer today. Most of the Sioux tribes have never accepted the funds awarded to them for their lost lands more than 20 years ago by the Indian Claims Commission. More recently, many of our nations, such as the Nations of the Three Affiliated Tribes,

had their best lands and ancestral homelands flooded by the dams along the Missouri River.

- **Broken treaties - trust responsibility of the U.S.** Partly as a result of the broken treaties, partly from an ever-changing and frail set of statutes, the U.S. has assumed a "trust responsibility" towards its Native American citizens. That "trust responsibility" is a legacy of the unspeakable efforts of the United States to eradicate our way of life.

- **Trust responsibility not fulfilled.** Particularly for the Indian Nations of the Great Plains, the "trust responsibility" has not begun to be fulfilled. Mr. President, as others will tell you in greater detail, we have the lowest life expectancy and the least access to quality health care of any group in the U.S., school buildings that are unsafe and should be condemned, four and five families staying through harsh winters in substandard housing meant for one family, unemployment of more than 50% and poverty that equals that of many third world countries. This is a legacy of broken treaties. The few dollars we obtain from our rural casinos does not begin to satisfy the needs of our communities.

- **Let us start a chapter in our relationship.** Mr. President, we need to start a new chapter in our difficult relationship. The great leaders from our past, Four Bears, Sitting Bull and many others, would expect nothing less from us as we enter a new millennium. We need a genuine commitment from the U.S., led by your Administration, that every effort will be made to honor and fulfill the trust responsibility the U.S. has towards our people in all respects—the trust responsibility to assist us to manage wisely our lands and our trust funds, to upgrade our health care systems, provide adequate housing, improve our schools and to help us build a healthy economy for our people.

Mr. President and members of the Cabinet, thank you for meeting with us today.

- Health Care -

Talking Points presented by Richard LaFromboise, Chairman, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

- **Treaty Obligation.** The Indian tribes of the Aberdeen Area signed solemn treaties with the United States Government which has failed to live up to those treaties, particularly in areas like health care and housing.

- **President's Initiative.** The Aberdeen Area tribes support the President's Initiative to Eliminate Disparities in Health Care Among Minorities, and the similar efforts of Secretary Shalala.

- **Shocking Health Care Statistics.** The health care disparities for Indian people in the Aberdeen Area are the worst in the country.
- **Per Capita Expenditures.** The expenditures by the Indian Health Service are one third of the national average, and only 1/3 of the average Medicare recipients - in other words, American Indians are much worse off having Indian Health Services as their care provider than if they were on welfare.
- **Inadequate Funding.** Indian Health Service programs are funded at barely one fourth of actual need.
- **Indian Life Expectancy.** The reservation life expectancy is more than 10 years less than the national average.
- **Diabetes.** Diabetes affects nearly one third of all tribal members in the Aberdeen Area.
- **Infant Mortality Rate.** The infant mortality rate in the Aberdeen Area is the worst in Indian country, more than four times the national average.
- **Alcohol Related Deaths.** Alcohol related deaths are more than sixteen times the national average.
- **Suicide Rates.** Suicide rates are more than 2 1/2 times the national average.
- **State of Emergency.** This situation is indeed an emergency and one with dire consequences for American Indians in the Aberdeen Area. Tribes need the President's strong support for increased funding for Indian Health Services in all areas: personnel, facilities, contract support costs, and level of care. All need to be substantially upgraded.

- Tribal Housing -

Talking Points presented by Chairman Gregg Bourland, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Treaty tribes obligation. Treaty tribes have a government-to-government relationship with the U.S. Government and should be considered a priority in all federal appropriations and programs.

Inadequate funding for housing. Housing funds have never been adequate and are now at critically low levels. Tribal governments cannot begin to meet the demand for housing, or even maintain existing housing stock with the funds that are available, both from federal, state and private sources. There are over 30,000 extremely low income families throughout the Aberdeen Area and Billings Area with housing needs totaling more than \$884 million.

58 year Housing backlog. Based on an annual funding level of \$18.7 million it will take 24 years to meet current needs, and over 58 years to meet the current backlog of housing projects.

Serving the neediest of the needy. Present funding

serves the neediest of the needy, yet, there still remains inadequacies in independent living quarters for the elderly, and unequipped housing for the handicapped.

Tribal Colleges unable to meet student housing needs. Local Tribal Colleges are unable to accommodate the growing housing need for students requiring housing to attend college.

Barriers to obtaining housing. Land status, credit history and lack of financial institutional support are among the barriers to obtaining conventional financing for housing needs.

20 percent are without homes. Over 20 percent of the Aberdeen Area tribal populations are without homes and are forced to share with other families or tribal members. In some cases, over 15 people share a three bedroom home.

More than 10,000 units needed. Over 10,400 housing units are needed to meet the existing needs of reserva-

tion residents. This does not include individuals that wish to return to the reservation as economic opportunities increase.

Static funding for past 13 years. For the past thirteen years, funding for the Aberdeen Area housing improvement projects has remained at the same levels with little or no increase. Under the new 1996 Native American Housing Act amendments, tribes receive even less

money than before. Along with this, costs of building new homes and maintaining existing and aging housing stock are constantly increasing.

Welfare Reform impossible without appropriate housing. Economic development, self-sufficiency, and compliance with new welfare reform requirements cannot happen without adequate, safe and affordable housing.

- Education -

Talking Points presented by Chairman Spike Big Horn, Fort Peck Assiniboine Sioux

Treaty Obligation and Federal Indian Law. Education is an important issue as it relates to our children and adults. As a part of the United States peace and settlement policy, historically, education has been a reference and promise in our major treaties and in Indian Law which are key elements to Tribal Nations, i.e. P.L. 93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1973, and P.L. 100-297. They deserve strong support by President Clinton to improve the dismal conditions of Indian Education and opportunities for Indian Youth. Our youth are the key to our future.

Fundamental priority. Education at all levels continues to be a fundamental priority for our Indian nations. Our young people must be prepared for the next millennium but must also be aware of who they are as Indian people. Our curricula should be designed by Tribal members and be appropriate to our cultures. It is imperative that funding and resources be provided to Indian Nations for Departments of Education to satisfy the infrastructure needs for establishing the standards and codes which ensure quality education for tribal members.

Construction funding must be improved. Education cannot be accomplished in schools that are poorly designed, falling down around them, unsafe and ill-equipped, and yet that is the condition of many of the schools on our reservations. BIA construction budgets for replacement of old, inadequate, and in many cases condemned schools are woefully inadequate. We need your administration to make a strong commitment in this area.

President Clinton Headstart Initiative. The President's Headstart Initiative is a welcome commitment to the needs of our youngest citizens. Pre-K programs are an important part of our development since our populations are growing and becoming younger. On many of our home reservations the population are ages 18 and younger, representing 51% or more of the total.

Basic funding for operations of K-12 schools must be increased. Indian Student Equalization Program (ISEP) funding for student transportation, base funding, operation and maintenance and administrative costs has been from 25% to more than 50% less than actual need in recent years as determined by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

Tribal colleges need increased support. We are thankful that President Clinton has shown support of the Tribal colleges by issuing the first Executive Order. These schools are a key to the future of our tribes. But funding for Tribally Controlled Colleges continues to lag far behind spending for similar postsecondary education efforts -- the Tribal colleges receive less than half the funding per student of other community based institutions. Please, Mr. President, request full funding from the Congress, as authorized by current law.

Increased and stable funding for United Tribes Technical College. Funding for United Tribes Technical College, now in its 30th year of operation, which is operated by the North Dakota tribes and provides postsecondary vocational education benefits for children and adults from throughout Indian country, should be increased and be made a permanent BIA budget item.



Those in attendance

Listed are the persons in attendance at the historic meeting, May 12, 1999, between President Clinton, his cabinet members and staff, members of the U.S. House and Senate and elected tribal leaders from North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana.

All were seated in a circle in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, Washington, D.C.:

- President Bill Clinton
- Jack J. Lew, Director of the Office of Management and Budget
- Senator Tom Daschle
- Senator Byron L. Dorgan
- Chairman Tex Hall, Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold
- Chairman Richard LaFromboise, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa
- Representative Earl Pomeroy
- Chairman Charles W. Murphy, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
- Chairwoman Myra Pearson, Spirit Lake Tribe
- Senator Kent Conrad
- Senator Jim Johnson
- Tribal Councilman Rodney Bordeaux, Rosebud Sioux Tribe
- President Harold Salway, Pine Ridge Sioux Tribe
- Chairman Harold Miller, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe
- Chairman Andrew Grey, Sr., Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe
- Chairman Steve Cournoyer, Yankton Sioux Tribe
- Chairman Tom Renfranz, Flandreau-Santee Sioux Tribe
- Chairman Greg Bourland, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
- Senator Max Baucus
- Chairman Spike Big Horn, Ft. Peck Assiniboine Sioux Tribe
- Tribal Councilman Eugene Limpy, Northern Cheyenne Tribe
- Chairman of the National Health Board, Alvin Windy Boy, Chippewa Cree Tribes of the Rocky Boy's Reservation
- Chairman Joseph McConnell, Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes of the Ft. Belknap Indian Community
- Vice-Chairman Fred Matt, Confederated Salish & Kootenai of the Flathead Reservation
- Dr. Dennis Big Hair, Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council
- Dr. Michael H. Trujillo, Director of Health and Human Services
- Kevin L. Thurm, Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services
- Richard Riley, Secretary of Education
- Andrew Cuomo, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
- Kevin Gover, Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs
- Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior
- Lynn Cutler, Senior Advisor for Indian Affairs to the Chief of Staff
- John Podesta, Chief of Staff

★ Dorgan supports paper on Tribal needs, presented to White House



North Dakota Senator Byron Dorgan presents his views during the White House meeting with Tribal Leaders from North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana, President Clinton, three cabinet members, and other Senators, Congressman Earl Pomeroy and the White House staff.

Seated (L to R) are Senator Tom Daschle (SD), U.S. Senate Minority Leader; Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold Chairman Tex Hall; Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Richard LaFromboise; unidentified participant; Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Charles W. Murphy; Spirit Lake Sioux Tribal Chairwoman Myra Pearson, and Senator Tim Johnson (SD).



First Lady recognizes Sakakawea at White House



First Lady Hillary Clinton discusses Sakakawea with Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Charles W. Murphy (and Chair of the United Tribes Technical College Board) on May 4, 1999, at the White House following the unveiling of the Sakakawea silver dollar, which will be released in the year 2000. According to Chairman Murphy, some 400 invited guests from Indian Tribes and other dignitaries attended the White House ceremony. During the ceremony, Mrs. Clinton acknowledged the role and contribution of American Indian Women, including President Janine Pease Pretty On Top, Little Big Horn Community College, MT. She noted that the Lewis & Clark Expedition conducted at the outset of the 19th Century would not have been successful without Sakakawea (Shashone Tribe and a namesake of the Hidatsa of North Dakota).

- Special Acknowledgements -

Special acknowledgment to all concerned and for arrangements by Lynn Cutler, Senior Advisor for Indian Affairs to the Chief of Staff, The White House; Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND); The Tribal Chairs of ND, SD, and MT. **Research & Development:** Tribal Planners; Aberdeen Area BIA Staff and Director Cora Jones, Agency BIA Staff; Indian Health Service Staff and Tribal Health Directors/Planners; United Tribes Counsel Tom Disselhorst, United Tribes Technical College Staff John Beheler and President Dr. David M. Gipp.

- A Special Publication -

The Northern Plains Tribal News is a special publication by the United Tribes Technical College and the Tribal Leaders of the United Tribes of North Dakota. (Phone: 701-255-3285 or Fax: (701) 530-0605)

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