

National Congress of American Indians  
International Indigenous Communications Project

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) is the oldest, largest, and most representative national Indian organization in America. The NCAI serves its Tribal governments and individual Indian constituencies as an advocate voice with the three branches of the Federal government expressing the collective concerns and interests of Indian Country.

Traditionally, NCAI has focused its attention on issues of a domestic nature. In recent years, however, NCAI has been drawn into the international arena as reports of escalating violence against indigenous populations by foreign governments have dramatically increased. The World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP), which has five regional councils around the globe with concentrations of indigenous populations, was the established organization to facilitate NCAI involvement. Involvement with the WCIP until this year was primarily of a communications exchange nature.

In the early months of 1982, brutal atrocities against Tribal populations by the governments of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua were documented by the press. The violence perpetrated by government and rebel forces bordering in many cases on genocide against these peaceful peoples were obviously planned and executed for the goal of economic profit from the resources on the inhabited lands. As the world economy continued to deteriorate and unstable dictatorships <sup>began</sup> military actions against rebellious citizenry, the lands and resources of the Tribes became a competitive prize for the warring factions to possess. The United States, Soviet Union, Israel, Brazil, Argentina, and Columbia became, directly or indirectly, involved in providing military aid to the governments and rebels. And the weaponry, when not used against competing forces, has been used with a vengeance against the virtually defenseless indigenous populations. International corporate interests follow closely behind the military machinery to capture and extract valuable resources.

In early March the United States expressed its outrage at the United Nations and through State Department communiques regarding the Nicaraguan government evacuation of 8500 Miskito Indians. The enclosed New York Times editorial, "Indian Rights, Rediscovered" correctly points out that the pious United States position completely ignores the atrocities perpetrated throughout Central and South America.

Events made it evident that NCAI must establish an organizational mechanism to research, monitor, and communicate at an international level. In mid-March by Executive Order, Rudy Ryser was employed as international counsel to the NCAI Executive Board.

In late May the NCAI at its mid-term convention unanimously endorsed the enclosed "Indian Crisis in Central America" resolution which:

- 1) outlines the current circumstances in Central America;
- 2) identifies the indigenous populations under threat and the international arms merchants providing local governments with weaponry;

- 3) commits the NCAI to work with the WCIP on inquiry commissions and diplomatic efforts to reduct/eliminate the violence;
- 4) instructs the NCAI to communicate its outrage to the Congress and appropriate Executive Branch officials; and
- 5) endorses cooperation and communication with the WCIP Central American Regional Council to expose the extent and purposes of the violence against Tribal peoples.

The resolution, sent to communities in Southern Mexico and Guatemala, served as a significant coalescing tool among these indigenous peoples. And in late July, the resolution was forwarded to Congressional leaders with a letter of protest that the U.S. is considering forwarding more weaponry and aid to El Salvador while the violence in that country against its native populations continues to escalate.

During the week of July 18-25, the NCAI President and Vice President along with their international counsel attended the World Assembly of First Nations in Regina, Saskatchewan. At this conference several historic events took place:

- 1) The NCAI, National Tribal Chairman's Association, the World Assembly of First Nations, and the Native Council of Canada agreed to a charter to establish a North American Indigenous Regional Council adjunct to the WCIP.
- 2) The North American national organizations agreed to establish technical interlinks under the umbrella of the WCIP Secretariate with the other four WCIP regional councils comprised of:

Central America  
South America  
South Pacific  
Northern Europe

- 3) The representatives agreed that indigenous peoples through their organizational structures needed to develop their own covenants to consolidate and advance their own ideology of self determination as indigenous nations within the world community.
- 4) The representatives agreed, in principle, to a proposed draft covenant on the rights of indigenous peoples to fundamentally address their rights and interests and concern for a better world. The draft covenant was to be review, reaffirmed, and ratified by the respective nations.

During the last week in July the NCAI contributed significantly to the discussion guidelines for the United Nations Work Group on Indigenous Rights meeting convened August 9 in Geneva, Switzerland. The work group was established by the U.N. Economic and Social Council due to the increasing number of human rights commission inquiries and negative reports.

#### Proposed Project

The NCAI is seeking interim emergency financing to establish an international affairs office to be operated by Rudy Ryser. The office would

carry out the missions outlined in the NCAI resolution and North American Indigenous Regional Council Agreements. Ryser would be primarily responsible for:

- . establishing and maintaining linkages of communication and technical support with indigenous nations around the world
- . developing position papers and communication materials for NCAI Board consideration
- . serving as the NCAI technical staff liaison with the WCIP Secretariate and its regional councils
- . supervising NCAI communications to the U.S. Congress, Executive Branch, and foreign nations regarding the rights of indigenous peoples
- . serving as technical advisor to NCAI President Joe DeLa Cruz and NCAI Vice President Ralph Eluska at international meetings regarding indigenous peoples

The project would also support information gathering and future fund raising initiatives through a sub-contract with SENSE, Inc. of Washington, D.C. SENSE's principal investigator, Joe Tallakson, would be primarily responsible for:

- . identifying future long range sources of funding for the NCAI international functions
- . developing grant proposals under the direction of Ryser
- . researching and disseminating international indigenous information useful to the project purposes to DeLa Cruz/Ryser

The project would also support travel and per diem allowance for DeLa Cruz/Eluska/Ryser to attend domestic and international meetings regarding indigenous peoples rights.

The attached budget also covers necessary project support expenses including NCAI administrative costs. The project is budgeted for 8 months due to the interim emergency financing needs for NCAI.

Progress reports on activities and expenditures would be made monthly to the designated project officer. Resumes for Ryser/Tallakson are attached.

If there are further questions regarding the purpose and scope of the proposed project, contact:

Rudy Ryser  
NCAI International Counsel  
728 212th Place, S.W.  
Lynnwood, WA 98036  
(206) 775-1007

or

Ron Andrade, Executive Director  
National Congress of American Indians  
202 E Street, N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
(202) 546-1168

NCAI International Indigenous Communications  
Project Budget

Salaries

Rudy Ryser, Counsel @1187.50/mo. x 8mo= \$9,500

Fringe Benefits

Rudy Ryser @ 10% of salary = \$ 950

Total Salary/Fringe \$10450

Consultant Services

SENSE, Inc. in Washington, D.C.  
\$900/mo. x 8mo.= \$7,200

Travel & Per Diem

Joe DeLa Cruz/Ralph Eluska, NCAI

Air Fare 4500

Per Diem 2175

Rudy Ryser

Air Fare 4500

Per Diem 2175

Total Air Fare/Per Diem \$13350

Field Support Expense

Telephone \$400/mo. x 8mo.

Postage \$ 25/mo. x 8mo.

Supplies \$ 75/mo. x 8mo.

Copier/Printing \$100/mo. x 8mo.

Subscriptions/Books 25/mo. x 8mo.

Total Field Support Expenses \$5000

Sub Total 36000

NCAI 15% Administrative Fee 5400

Total Project Cost \$41,400

In-Kind Space/Equipment Contribution \$4680.00