

Emerging International Indian Affairs Agenda

Implications for the Lummi Indian Tribe Self-Governance

Snap-Shot Summary

- Lummi self-government is no ordinary issue. It is all encompassing and a politically powerful issue which challenges the basic interests of the United States government. More fundamental than any other issue faced by Lummi people, self-government is the difference between being a free people or a people dependent on the whims and interests of another government. Its importance is measurable by the lengths to which the U.S. government is prepared to go to limit or defeat the fulfillment of Lummi's self-government aspirations.
 - The United States government has since 1970 internally asserted that its policy is to promote Indian self-determination, self-government and conduct Indian/U.S. relations on a government to government basis. In the international arena, it has slowly evolved a position which urges that all of these rights be limited or completely rejected.
 - Agreements now under consideration by the United Nations and the International Labour Organization will have a direct influence on the relations between the Lummi Indian Tribe and the United States of America
 - The United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations will meet in its Seventh Session from August 1 - August 4, 1989 in Geneva, Switzerland to continue development of the **Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**. This declaration will probably be considered by the United Nations General Assembly in 1992.
 - The United Nations began in 1988 a **Study of the Significance of Treaties and agreements and Other Constructive Arrangements**. This study is the subject of considerable controversy. The three-year study will research treaties and agreements between indigenous nations and states' governments.
 - The 144 country International Labour Organization began a process to partially revise the **Convention Concerning the Protection and Integration of Indigenous and Other Tribal and Semi-Tribal Populations in Independent Countries** in 1985. Proposed revisions were published in the U.S. government's Federal Register in March 1989 requesting comments from tribal governments. The International Labour Organization will meet in June 1989 to adopt the revised Convention.
 - No nation which seriously seeks to govern itself should minimize the significance of international agreements aimed at limiting the exercise of that right. That there is a deliberate international effort to limit the rights of the Lummi Indian Tribe and other indigenous nations, there is no doubt. Whether the Lummi Indian Tribe is prepared to extend its external agenda to defend its interests remains a decision yet to be made.
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