



**AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT  
GRAND GOVERNING COUNCIL**

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**Intervention and remarks to the UN Permanent  
Forum on Indigenous Issues  
Tenth Session, May 20, 2011, United Nations, New  
York  
Agenda Item #5  
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(Clyde H. Bellecourt)  
Founder and National Director, American Indian  
Movement  
Executive Director, Heart of the Earth Inc.**

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Boozhoo, greetings my friends and relatives. Nee Gon Nway Wee Dung indizhenicoz. My name is Clyde Bellecourt. It is always an honor to speak to Indigenous leadership and peoples of the world. Allow me to give you a brief history of the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) and this Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. I am founder and national director of the American Indian Movement, and one of the co-founders of International Indian Treaty Council. The American Indian Movement was formed in July 1968 when we felt that absolutely nothing was being done to upgrade the conditions that Indian people were being forced to live under here in the United States. Not one single treaty made between Native nations and the United States was being honored, which guaranteed us and our children's survival. The right to practice our own spiritual and ceremonial way of life; to speak our languages, to hunt, fish and gather, and practice our traditional forms of government.

In 1974, nine and a half months after the liberation of Wounded Knee, the American Indian Movement leadership was threatened with hundred of years in prison for defending our treaty rights at Wounded Knee in South Dakota. In U.S. Federal court, the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 was introduced each and every day by famed attorney Larry Laventhal, as our defense in one of the longest trials in the criminal history of the U.S. government involving Indian peoples. Judge Fred Nichols refused to admit this covenant of international law as our defense. Of course the world now knows that all charges were thrown out. Judge Fred Nichols stated that 'the rivers of justice have been muddied in my courtroom for the past 9-1/2 months. It is not the Indian people who are guilty here: It is the US government.' He expressed judicial rage for governmental misconduct, illegal use of military forces and illegal search and seizure. 'Who do you think you are?' he demanded of the prosecutor. 'You cannot use military forces *anywhere* in the world without presidential or congressional approval.' He then threw all the charges out.

Following all of these events the American Indian Movement leadership decided that we had to form a treaty council to bring our case before the world communities, or we would never survive as a people, because of the ongoing attempts to annihilate us, the continuous violation of treaties, the destruction of our natural resources, and attacks on our traditional way of life, including the century long savagery of the Federal Indian Boarding Schools. This first meeting took place on the Standing Rock Sioux Nation (reservation) in South Dakota. Traditional leadership and delegates from 96 nations attended this historic gathering.

It was determined that we would never survive as a people unless we reached out to the world community, and brought our case before the world court. The genocide against our people did not allow us to pray in our

traditional manner, speak our languages, or practice our traditional way of life. And these assault on our cultures continue in one form or another to this very day.

In 1975 the IITC applied to the UN for Non Governmental Organization (NGO) status and in 1977 it was granted. Then in September of that year the IITC immediately hosted an international conference and met in Geneva. This included two hundred and eighty two delegates from throughout the Western hemisphere, many of them from Central and South America that were in political exile. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples here today was the result of that conference in Geneva and we reached out to our 370 million Indigenous relatives around the world. As all of you know, it was a thirty year struggle within the UN structure to bring forth The **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP)** of the world that was finally adopted by the General Assembly on **September 13, 2007.**

My brothers and sisters, the battle to protect the land continues, when seventy five percent of the all energy resources in North America are still on Indian lands. Most importantly, water –our most precious medicine- is still being stolen by governments and greedy corporation. We must stand together in total solidarity to fight these monstrous acts for the survival of our children. We must continue to think like our grandfathers and grandmothers, chiefs and great leaders before us, who envisioned what it would be like for their children seven generations from now.

To conclude Madame Chairperson, we demand that President Barack Obama as the “commander and chief” and his war council to recognize and issue a public apology for the continued attack on Indian people, for comparing one of our greatest leaders, Geronimo, to one of the most notorious terrorists known to the world, Osama Bin Laden. It’s time for North America to get rid of

the frontier mentality, and the myth that ‘the only good Indian is a dead Indian.’

Finally Madam Chairperson, my delegation looks forward to strengthening this great world family relationship that has been created and developed, and that our children seven generations from now will remember us for protecting and promising their rightful legacy of a spiritual and traditional way of life. **THE SPIRIT OF GERONIMO WILL LIVE WITH ALL OF US FOREVER.**

**Nee Gon Nway Wee Dung, Thunder Before the Storm, has spoken.**



For more information:

Movies:

*“William Kunstler: Disturbing the Universe”*

Books:

Peter Matthiessen - [The Spirit of Crazy Horse](#)  
Steven T. Newcomb - [Pagans in the Promised Land](#)  
Vine Deloria - [Red Earth, White Lies](#)  
[God is Red](#)  
Dee Brown - [Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee](#)  
Winona LaDuke – [All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life](#)  
[The Militarization of Indian Country](#)

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