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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 27, 1997

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

3-1-97

RECOMMENDED TELEPHONE CALL

TO:

Representative Carolyn McCarthy

DATE:

February 27, 1997

RECOMMENDED BY:

John Hilley John Hilley

PURPOSE:

To return Representative Carolyn McCarthy's call.

BACKGROUND:

On February 26, Reps. Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), Nita Lowey (D-NY) and Eliot Engel (D-NY) wrote you a letter requesting that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) "enact new, tighter regulations for the sale of handguns" as a response to the tragic shooting that occurred on the Empire State Building last Sunday, February 23 (see attached). Press reports have described how easily the Empire State Building shooter obtained his Florida state residence card while living in a motel. This card then allowed him to purchase the murder weapon. Consequently, Rep. McCarthy's letter specifically requests new federal regulations that would require all federally-licensed gun sellers to ask prospective gun purchasers for two forms of personal identification - a photo I.D. and some legitimate proof of state residence - and a local telephone number, before selling a firearm. (A copy of the letter is attached.)

Rep. McCarthy has become famous for her successful run for Congress to oust former Congressman Dan Frisa. Rep. McCarthy, whose husband was killed and son was seriously injured when a crazed gunman opened fire on a Long Island Rail Road commuter train in 1993, decided to run for Congress following Rep. Frisa's vote to repeal the assault weapons ban. Rep. McCarthy easily won her contest with Rep. Frisa by successfully tying Rep. Frisa to Speaker Gingrich and by vowing to fight for gun control legislation in Congress.

Copied to
John Hilley
COS

I called her
today her name Kelly
who call her husband
Please call her soon

Also call her on any
Monday or Tuesday
Somebody who
is right about this

Rep. McCarthy has called you to follow-up on her letter.
We recommend that you return her call to let her know that
you have already instructed the BATF to review all
possible options - including changes to the current forms
that federally-licensed firearm dealers are now required to
complete, new regulatory changes and new statutory
changes - for preventing an incident like the tragedy at the
Empire State Building from reoccurring.

CONTACT PERSON AND
TELEPHONE NUMBER(S):

Rep. Carolyn McCarthy 225-5516

DATE OF SUBMISSION:

February 27, 1997

ACTION: _____

Talking Points:

- Thank you for your letter on the recent shooting at the Empire State Building. This was an extremely disturbing incident. BATF and the FBI are working closely with the NYPD in the investigation of this case.
- In the aftermath of this horrible incident, on Monday I directed Ray Kelly the Undersecretary of Enforcement at the Treasury Department [and the former Commissioner of Police in New York City] to review the circumstances in this case and provide us with recommendations.

⑤ He is presently reviewing whether to recommend changes to firearm purchasing forms, ATF regulations, as well as any statutory changes that need to be made. Within the context of this comprehensive review, I will make sure he gives full consideration to the suggestions you have made in your letter.

- We intend to make whatever changes are necessary to prevent tragedies such as this one from occurring again.

⑥ As you know, Ray has been very active in improving our Federal firearms regulations since he took this position. I will have Ray Kelly personally get back to you on this issue later today.

- Over the last four years, we have made tremendous improvements in our firearms laws -- the Brady Bill, the assault weapons bans, reducing fly-by-night gun traffickers. We are making a difference. And I have every intention of moving forward with smart and effective gun control measures. My juvenile justice bill, which was introduced earlier this week, requires that trigger locks be sold with all firearms in order to prevent the kind of gun accidents that so often victimize children. I want to thank you for your leadership on this issue and I look forward to working together on this critically important issue.

97 12:05 FROM: 10:2024366220 PAGE:02/02

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 1997

President William J. Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton,

As you are aware, last Sunday, a madman took a .380 caliber Beretta handgun to the roof of the Empire State Building and shot seven people -- killing one -- and then turned the gun on himself.

Many of the details of this horrible crime are shocking. The gunman, Ali Hassan Abu Kamal, had been in this country for only five weeks. His address was a motel in Florida.

Many of the Members of the House will be introducing legislation to address the failure of the system to stop Kamal. We certainly support such legislation.

However, we all know that it takes time for laws to pass. In the meantime, your Administration could pass new regulations to foil temporary visitors and transients from buying a gun. This change in regulation could be made today.

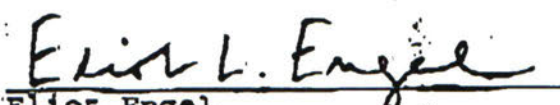
We urge you to instruct the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF) to enact new, tighter regulations for the sale of handguns. These regulations would require gun sellers to ask for two forms of personal identification (including photo I.D.), proof of residence in the state (e.g. a recent utility bill), and a local telephone number. These logical regulations could save lives.

There is such an easy answer to this terrible problem. The BATF should promulgate these regulations as soon as possible. Lives are at stake.

Sincerely,


Nita M. Lowey


Carolyn McCarthy


Elliot Engel

Rebecca A. Cameron

02/27/97 07:30:19 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Nancy V. Hernreich/WHO/EOP, Betty W. Currie/WHO/EOP

cc:

Subject: Rep. McCarthy

----- Forwarded by Rebecca A. Cameron/WHO/EOP on 02/27/97 07:27 PM -----



Stacey L. Rubin

02/27/97 05:32:46 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Rebecca A. Cameron/WHO/EOP

cc:

Subject: Rep. McCarthy

In the President's talking points to Rep. McCarthy , it states " I will have Ray Kelly personally get back to you on this issue later today."

Therefore, once the President calls the Congresswoman, if someone would give myself or Peter Jacoby a heads-up, we'll orchestrate Ray Kelly calling Rep. McCarthy. Thanks. Please call me if you have any questions.

CAROLYN MCCARTHY

4TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

1725 LONGWORTH BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-5516
(202) 225-5758 (fax)1 FULTON AVENUE, SUITE 12
HEMPSTEAD, NEW YORK 11550
(516) 489-7066
(516) 489-7283 (fax)**CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515****COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE****SUBCOMMITTEES:**
EMPLOYER EMPLOYEE RELATIONS
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION,
TRAINING AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING**COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS****SUBCOMMITTEES:**
GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS
AND OVERSIGHT
TAX, FINANCE AND EXPORTS

February 25, 1997

**The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500****Dear Mr. President:**

I wanted to follow-up on an earlier letter you should have received from Congresswoman Nita Lowey, Congressman Elliot Engel and me. We had written to urge you to instruct the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to enact new, tighter regulations for the sale of handguns. I simply wanted to make this extra effort to encourage you to take action because this is an issue of profound personal importance to me.

As you know, I became involved in politics and eventually ran for Congress because of the Long Island Railroad incident. The recent tragic events at the Empire State Building brought back memories that made 1993 feel like yesterday. My heart especially goes out to the families of the victims of this past weekend's episode.

The similarities between the Long Island Railroad incident and the Empire State Building shooting are striking, particularly that both perpetrators returned to kill in New York after going out of the state to buy their handguns. Both men were allowed to purchase their weapons after establishing residency at a hotel. I can't believe that others are now living the same nightmare that my family has endured. We can not allow this disturbing pattern to continue.

During my short service here on Capitol Hill, I have been impressed by your bipartisan efforts to achieve what is right for the American people. I found the policy blueprint detailed in your State of the Union Address challenging and I look forward to working with your administration to complete the important unfinished business now before us. I believe preventing another Empire State Building or Long Island Railroad situation is both achievable and critically important.

While my colleagues and I work to pass legislation, I urge you to take the steps that are achievable today. I have been informed that the ATF currently has the authority to tighten regulations on the sale of handguns. It is my understanding that ATF can immediately modify Form 4473 to require sufficient personal identification and proof of residence of the purchaser.



10:26 FROM:REP MCCARTHY
EOL ELS 5155
10:26 ELS 5155
Mr. President, changing Form 4473 is the kind of common sense regulatory adjustment that can help prevent another similar tragic incident from occurring in the next two weeks or the next two years. I personally appeal to you to direct the ATF to make these required changes. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carolyn M.Carthy
Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

3-1-97

SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS

CHH

Murphy

Am. Revs

Balanced Budget Amendment

- I want to thank you both for your efforts in opposition to the Balanced Budget Amendment. As you both know, I have made some pretty strong comments about the potentially negative effects of a Constitutional Amendment, so I am particularly grateful for your work against the proponents.
- While it appears that Senator Daschle's hard work has succeeded in solidifying Democratic resistance and helped us secure Senator Torricelli's support for our position we should not let up now.
- I understand that the House Republicans may want to schedule a vote, even if the Senate defeats the measure. If that is the case, we will work with you to defeat it in the House. We should not allow the proposal to maintain any momentum if we can avoid it.

Campaign Finance Reform

- I urge you to continue your efforts to force campaign finance reform to a vote in the Senate. It is extremely important that we keep the pressure on the Republican Leadership and demonstrate our strong support for reform.
- We must continue to reach out in a bipartisan attempt to get agreement campaign finance reform even if the Republican's continue to block its consideration.

Bipartisan Working Group Meetings

- I believe these working groups can be a good testing grounds for agreement on issues of mutual interest. They can be a good gauge on whether we can find common areas of agreement. *De well work the sub*
- The Working Groups are not intended to be a shortcut for bypassing the regular budget process.

Budget

- I still believe that it is in our best interest to reach an agreement early on the budget, however, I am open to your thoughts and recommendations on the best approach.
- On the subject of the Consumer Price Index, I believe any adjustment must be not be political or budgetary but based on accuracy.

*new copy
- Rahm Emanuel*

SCHOENKE & ASSOCIATES
6550 Rock Spring Drive
Suite 500
Bethesda, MD 20817-1126
(301) 897-5555
Fax (301) 897-0853

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
2-28-97

February 26, 1997

Via Facsimile

**The Honorable Bill Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500**

*Copied to
Rahm Emanuel
Bruce Lindsey
COS*

Dear Mr. President:

Be assured, I do not feel slighted that I was not invited to sleep in the Lincoln Bedroom. (Is there another list for those who were not invited to sleep there!)

As I shared with you on Monday evening, while we may have made a few fundraising mistakes, the media and the opposition are reaching. I felt the briefing on Tuesday morning by the new party leaders was an effort to assure us there would be no mistakes in the future and represented a defensive posture. I would encourage just the opposite - a strong, forceful offensive campaign. Those who gave to support your re-election did so honestly and legally. If they had interests which could be affected legislatively, they expected to be heard; there is nothing wrong with this and we don't need to bow our heads.

I especially liked your comments after dinner. I also believe this to be a unique time in history, a time when it might be possible to shape events with aggressive and consistent leadership through your office. Doug Sosnik, who gave an excellent presentation on Tuesday morning, stated he felt our country is in a critical position and its leadership will move it one way or the other. He encouraged us to participate in that movement. I look forward to that opportunity.

Respectfully,

Ry
**Raymond F. Schoenke Jr.
Chairman of the Board
Chief Executive Officer**

RFS:jp

P.S. Dave Magness, who was a former classmate of yours at Georgetown, has joined our firm as an executive VP. He says he's a friend of yours but he hasn't slept in the Lincoln Bedroom either! Are we still F.O.B.s?

To M. Etcheverste / Bruce / C Smith

FyB worth reading

[Signature]

copied to
M. Etcheverste
Bruce Reed
Craig Smith
COS

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
3-1-97



THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
3-1-97

IN THE YEAR OF 'DANCES WITH WOLVES,'
EVERYBODY WANTED TO BE ON THE SENATE
INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. NEARLY A
DECADE LATER, IT CAN HARDLY GET A QUORUM

THE TUN FASHIONABLE

The old woman in the wheelchair says something in Lakota and Milo Yellow Hair nods his head. He's on the phone with the power company, making some kind of arrangement to keep her electricity on.

She's a tiny, wizened, gray-haired woman in a blue sweater with a black- and beige-striped blanket wrapped around her torso. From the bottom of the blanket sticks one foot, clad in a blue sneaker. The other foot is gone, lost to diabetes, a common fate here on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. A teenage boy walks in, carrying a tiny 2-month-old baby wrapped tightly in a blanket. He hands the infant to the old woman, who cradles it in her lap, and then he pushes her wheelchair out of this room in the Oglala Sioux tribal headquarters.

Yellow Hair, the tribal vice president, turns to the next person waiting beside his cluttered desk—a thin, haggard, middle-aged man with long black hair pulled back in a ponytail. Like the old woman, he's clutching a tattered envelope full of folded papers. They are bills, and he hands them to Yellow Hair, who thumbs through them.

"Cable?" Yellow Hair says. "What do you have cable for? Buy a book! An old lady on a respirator needs to pay her electric bill—fine. But cable TV—that's a luxury, man."

The man hangs his head contritely but doesn't say a word.

Yellow Hair relents. This guy is an old acquaintance with a long history of troubles. "I'll give you \$20," Yellow Hair says, reaching into his back pocket for his wallet. "That's all I got."

BY PETER CARLSON PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURA WILSON





NORTHERN SIOUX LEADER MILO YELLOW HAIR: "WE GET A TWO-WEEK COOL DOWN."



THERE ARE 1,200 FAMILIES ON THE 10-YEAR WAITING LIST FOR SUBSIDIZED HOUSING AT PINE RIDGE. ANGIE AND EZZERT TOBACCO AND THEIR CHILDREN LIVE IN THIS TRAILER.

It goes on all day, day after day, a steady flow of supplicants coming into the tribal offices at Pine Ridge, which is in Shannon County, S.D., the poorest county in America, a place where unemployment hovers around 80 percent, where the per capita income is \$3,417 a year, the lowest in the nation, where two out of three people live below the federal poverty level.

"They need money for electric bills, food bills, propane for heating," Yellow Hair says. "They've got somebody in the hospital and they need \$30 for gas money to go up to Rapid City and back... I know the people and I try to help. This is a Band-Aid approach, but it's the best I can do."

The tribe has a fund for these little emergencies, \$10,000 every quarter, but that's usually gone in a few weeks. Yellow Hair also sells T-shirts—one of them, celebrating the Sioux's 1876 victory over Custer, hangs on his wall—and he uses the profits for these emergencies.

"If I don't have T-shirt money, it comes out of my pocket," he says. "I have a salary of \$40,000 a year. That's an ungodly amount for people around here."

He's 46, a big man with a thick, pock-marked face and black hair that hangs past his shoulders. As he talks, he keeps fiddling nervously with his Bic pen, pulling the cap off, then slamming it back on with his palm. "When the next cold spell hits, we better have money for propane," he says. "We get a two-week cold spell, people freeze to death—literally."

THE GRAVE OF SIOUX CHIEF RED CLOUD. UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP THE INDIANS WON THE WAR ENDED BY THE FORT LARAMIE TREATY OF 1868.



PINE RIDGE IS IN THE POOREST COUNTY IN AMERICA, WHERE THE PER CAPITA INCOME IS \$3,417 A YEAR AND TWO OUT OF THREE PEOPLE LIVE IN POVERTY.

He stops, then exhales a long, sad sigh. "You do what you can," he says softly.

Eileen Janis wanders into the office and listens for a while. "This is like a Third World country," she says. She's a 33-year-old hospital technician who represents the town of Pine Ridge on the tribal council. She climbs into her van, drives about half a mile and parks on a street lined with rusted-out cars and tiny, weather-beaten homes. It's Army surplus housing, two-bedroom wooden boxes that were moved to Pine Ridge from a base back in the 1960s.

Geraldine Blue Bird, 41, is sitting on the battered porch of the house she shares with seven relatives. An extension cord runs out one window, weaves past empty Busch and Pennzoil cans, follows a crack in the road and ends up in the house across the street.

"That house don't have no electricity," Blue Bird explains. "The electricity gave out in it. The electrician, he said, 'If I put a meter in there, it'll burn.' So we improvised, ran a cord. They got little ones in there; they've got to run the heater."

Janis drives around the corner, stops in front of a white house with an old basketball backboard covering a hole over one window. "The little girl was on the toilet in there and the whole thing just fell through the floor," she says.

Eleven people live in that house. They have nowhere else to go: On a reservation with a population of about 23,000, there are 1,200 families on the 10-year-long waiting list for subsidized federal housing.

Janis looks around. A dead pickup truck filled with uncollected trash sits next to a silver trailer that houses three families. Across the street, there's a weed-infested graveyard. A pack of mangy dogs prance past like conquerors.

It's a street with no name, like all the roads on the reservation, Janis says, but it's known informally as Sesame Street because so many kids live there, maybe 40 of them in half a dozen houses.

"I could condemn these houses in one day," she adds. "But I can't do it because they have nowhere to go."

['A NATIONAL DISGRACE']

Half a millennium after Columbus misnamed them, American Indians are the poorest people in the United States.

The country's 2.1 million Indians, about 400,000 of whom live on reservations, have the highest rates of poverty, unemployment and disease of any ethnic group in America. That might surprise Americans who have consumed countless cheery feature stories about Indians making big bucks on casino gambling. Some tribes—like the Mashantucket Pequots of Connecticut, who own Foxwoods, the country's largest casino—have indeed gotten very rich. But less than a quarter of America's 557 Indian tribes own casinos, and only 48 tribes earn more than \$10 million a year on gaming. Far more typical than Foxwoods is Prairie

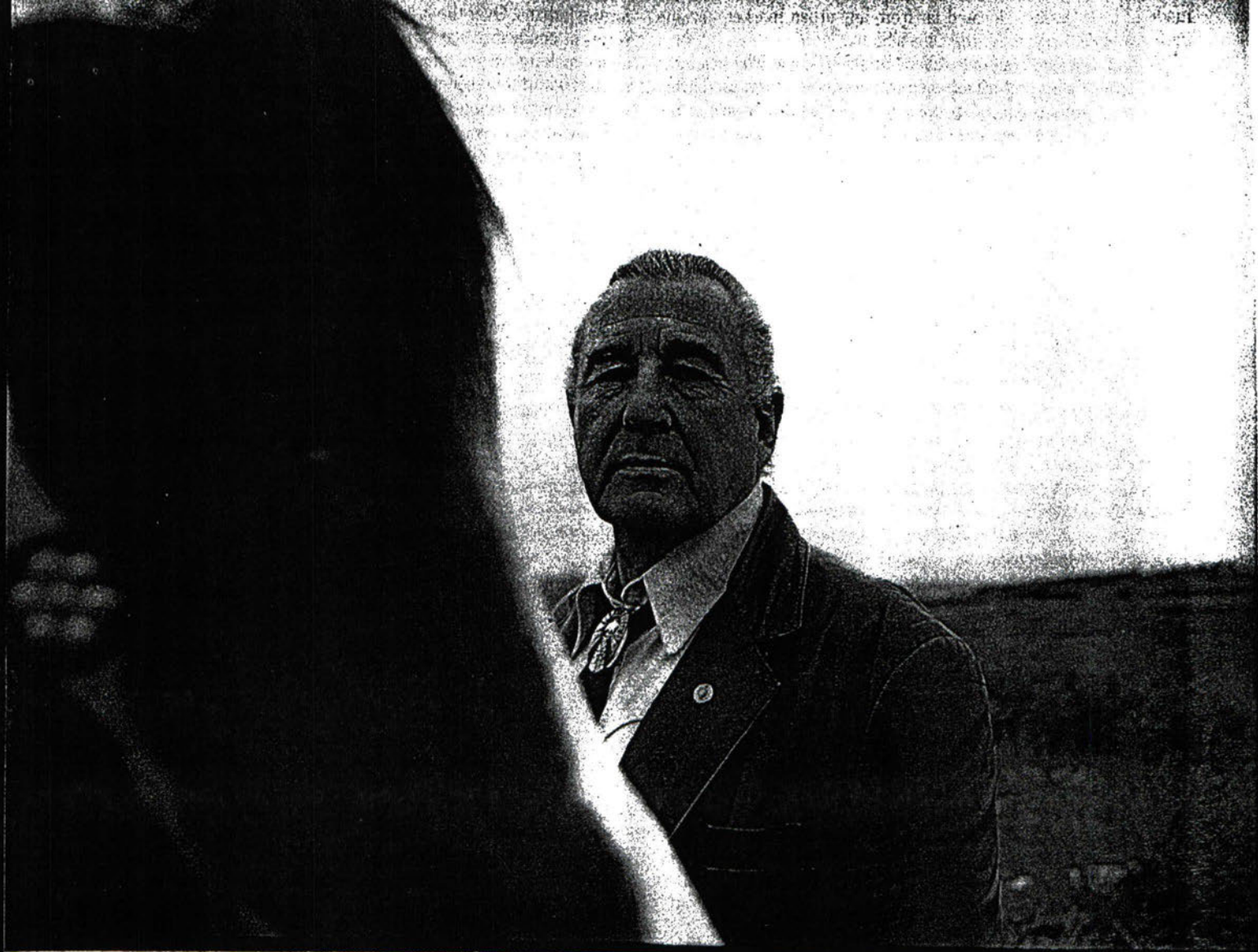
Wind, the casino on the Pine Ridge reservation—a gambling hall made of three trailers, located far from any urban market, earning barely \$1 million a year for the Oglala Sioux.

It is impossible to generalize about 2 million people who belong to more than 500 different tribes, each with its own history, each living in different circumstances—peoples as varied as the Navajo of the Southwestern desert and the Lummi of Puget Sound. But all Indian tribes do share one thing: a relationship with the United States government that is unique. They are “domestic dependent nations,” as Chief Justice John Marshall termed them in a landmark Supreme Court decision in 1832—“distinct independent political communities retaining their original natural rights as the undisputed possessors of the soil.” As such, they constitute the only minority group in America that has signed peace treaties with the U.S. government, the only ethnic group with a government agency—the Bureau of Indian Affairs—specifically devoted to its well-being.

Of course, this special relationship has seldom worked out well for the Indians. Over the last 150 years, the government has tried a series of conflicting ways of dealing with the natives of this continent—making war on them, making treaties with them, breaking treaties with them, sending them to Oklahoma, forcing them onto reservations, forcing them off reservations, permitting them to own land collectively, forcing them to divide the land into individual plots, dispatching their children to boarding schools hundreds of miles from home, closing the boarding schools and sending the children home, outlawing practice of their religions, legalizing practice of those religions, discriminating against them in employment at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, discriminating in favor of them in employment with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, permitting them to run gambling operations under certain circumstances, increasing funding for the BIA and, in fiscal 1996, cutting funding for the BIA by \$160 million, or 9 percent.

MICHAEL SIERRA, WITH HIS WIFE AND FIVE OF THEIR 12 CHILDREN, HAS A DREAM FOR PINE RIDGE, A VISION OF A SELF-SUFFICIENT PEOPLE.





"THE FREE-ROAMING DAYS ARE GONE," SAYS SEN. BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL. "AND THERE HASN'T BEEN ANYTHING THAT'S . . . A GOOD SUBSTITUTE FOR IT."

Now, Native Americans remain at the bottom in almost every measurable economic category. Indians earn only a little more than half as much money as the average American—less money per capita than whites, blacks, Asian Americans and Hispanics. Nearly a third of Native Americans live in poverty, which is more than twice the rate for Americans in general. And Indians are far more liable to succumb to diseases associated with the poor—four times as likely to die of alcoholism, three times as likely to die of tuberculosis, nearly twice as likely to die of diabetes.

"It's a national disgrace," says Sen. John McCain, the Arizona Republican who until last month chaired the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. "Any objective observer would say that our treatment of Native Americans is a national disgrace."

Over the years, the government's policies have come and gone like fads, each billed as a humanitarian reform, each accompanied by its own buzzwords—"removal," "allotment," "termination," "relocation," "assimilation." Today, the buzzword is "self-determination." Everyone—tribal leaders, BIA officials, members of Congress—talks about the need for greater "self-determination" for tribes, greater Indian control of reservations, less dependence on the BIA. Now, on reservations and on Capitol Hill, the debate is over exactly what "self-determination" is and what it could mean.

'BACK TO THE BLANKET'

"We need more Indians or none," says Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, "but one is the wrong number to have in Congress."

Campbell, a Colorado Republican, is the one Indian in Congress. He is also, as of last month, the chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, the first Indian ever to chair it. He's a member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe, and on the wall of his Senate office is a knife once owned by his great-grandfather, Black Horse, who fought on the winning side of the Battle of Little Bighorn.

"It's a funny kind of thing you feel up there," Campbell says, talking about the Northern Cheyenne reservation in Montana. His long hair is pulled back in a ponytail and his neckerchief is clasped at the throat by a piece of jewelry decorated with a picture of a buffalo. "They talk about Indian pride all the time. They talk about cultural values and ancient traditions and the Indian way, but the daily existence is almost a tragic kind of existence. Too many people, their only form of sustenance is food stamps and commodities. Commodities are tin cans with the generic white labels with black print, surplus government butter and cheese and so on. Because of that, many of them have a very high-starch, low-protein diet, which leads to diabetes, which leads to gangrene, so you see a lot of the old people with missing legs because they have to cut them off. I think in

'INDIANS DON'T WANT TO BE DEPENDENT,' SAYS CAMPBELL, 'BUT WHEN IT'S EITHER THAT OR STARVE, THE CHOICE IS CLEAR.'

any society, if you have a lack of jobs, low self-esteem, all that stuff—I don't care if it's Indian or black or white—you're probably going to have the same problems."

All the problems of urban ghettos are found on the reservation, he says—drug abuse, alcoholism, dropouts, suicide, teenage pregnancy. "Some of the kids have such low self-esteem that the only thing they think they can succeed at is having babies—and do they ever. There's a huge population explosion among young kids."

On the reservation, as elsewhere, teenage parenthood and a lack of jobs combine to create a cycle of welfare dependency. "Indians don't want to be dependent, but when it's either that or starve, the choice is clear," he says. "Most Indian people, particularly the Sioux, are very, very proud people. But they can't go back to the old way. It's gone. The buffalo are gone. The free-roaming days are gone. And there hasn't been anything that's been able to be a good substitute for it."

He didn't grow up on the reservation but his father did, and Campbell still considers it home. "I belong up there," he says. Like many Indians who make their living in the city, he returns to "the rez" a couple of times a year for spiritual sustenance. "We call it going back to the blanket," he says. "It means turning into an Indian. It means going back to your culture. So when I'm up there, I just do Indian stuff—go to the powwows and the society meetings and the sweats and that kind of stuff. Then I put on my suit and tie and

go back to the city and be a senator again." He laughs. "It's like recharging for me. It's wonderful."

The Cheyenne were migratory hunters until whites exterminated the buffalo and herded the Indians onto reservations. Now, in their impoverished little corner of Montana, Campbell's tribe maintains a herd of about 280 buffalo. "To an Indian, the buffalo have a spiritual presence, and they treat them different than a cow," he says. "When they're going to kill a cow, they send it to the butcher shop. But when they butcher a buffalo, they do it the old way. They shoot him on the spot and butcher him right on top of his hide. Everybody lines up with a bucket and they chop off a chunk of meat and they put them in the buckets until there's nothing left but guts and bones. And they bleach the bones and use them for utensils." He smiles. "I think that's nice. I remember the first time I took my son home and he saw an Indian buffalo-butcher. He never forgot that."

Equally unforgettable, he says, is the sun dance, an ancient religious ritual of fasting, dancing and, sometimes, body piercing. It's an annual summer rite of purification and thanksgiving, but it was banned for decades by the white Christians who ran the reservations. Now, in a ren-

aissance of traditional Native American religion, it is increasingly popular among the Cheyenne and the Sioux.

"I go to sun dances just to watch, to support them," Campbell says. "You really have to be mentally prepared for it. It's four days, no food, no water. A lot of them pass out. It's so physically exhausting that they can't get through it. If you pass out and you come to, you get back in it. I admire that dedication to their religion, because the physical demands of the sun dance are unreal. I guarantee it's like no other church you've been to. It's not like eating a wafer."

'FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN MONEY'

As soon as the Sioux arrive at Fort Laramie, they erect three teepees made of long pine poles and canvas skins. It's a raw, cold fall day and they quickly build a bonfire, then pitch a big square white tent and fill it with rows of gray folding chairs.

The Indians file into the tent and sit down. There are only a few dozen at first, most of them wearing bluejeans and windbreakers, baseball caps or cowboy hats. Four drummers lay down a slow, steady beat while chanting. Everybody stands with head bowed as half a dozen men march slowly into the tent, carrying ceremonial staffs decorated with fur and feathers. One of the men ignites a small bundle of sage, and the smoke perfumes the air with a spicy incense.

Outside, gusting winds pelt the tent with pellets of hail. Inside, a group of male elders stand in a circle, solemnly passing around a long, ceremonial pipe and exhaling sweet smoke. When they finish, they shake hands, the audience sits down and Milo Yellow Hair, who organized this conference, rises to speak.

"Welcome to this land that was made sacred many, many years ago," he says. "We want to reaffirm and rebless the ideals that were set here 128 years ago."

Yellow Hair is referring to the Fort Laramie Treaty—a peace accord signed by the United States and the Sioux *continued on page 20*

LANCE MORGAN, OVERSEEING CONSTRUCTION OF A WINNEBAGO-OWNED MOTEL IN IOWA, IS CHANNELING THE TRIBE'S CASINO PROFITS INTO MORE STABLE VENTURES.



A couple of decades ago, it was impressive enough if a seafood restaurant used fresh rather than frozen ingredients. But McCormick & Schmick's promises more, emphasizing its Pacific Northwest origins.

fresh and mild—sometimes moist and silky, sometimes limp and dry. Rarely will it have much intrinsic flavor. Oddly, it will be served with mashed potatoes—which would work better with the menu's few meat dishes. But the one time I got rice instead, it was so gummy that I understood the potatoes. Alongside, you'll find brightly colored vegetables—broccoli and carrots—which you might think somebody forgot to cook. But since they've been heated, the likelihood is that the kitchen intended them to be near-raw.

The fancier the dishes, the further the kitchen slips. Crab cakes are shredded and compact, tasting like generic fish cakes. Grouper coated with cashews and flounder with a Parmesan crust have a pleasant crunch and are enlivened by diced peppers on the former and capers on the latter, but there is not much else to taste. A New Orleans seafood stew turns out to be the chicken soup with dry chunks of fish, tasteless shrimp and scallops and slices of moderately spicy sausage. It's far from glamorous, but it makes a decent and filling lunch for \$8.50. The "lunch and light entrees" section of the menu is the secret to good value here. It's available all day, and the dishes range from \$6.60 to \$9.95. You need take no great financial risk as you find what suits you.

Most of the food is simply middling. One dish, however, stands out as virtually inedible. Penne with hot chili prawns and shiitakes starts with the advantage of large, plump shrimp that are still moist after cooking. But the dish is so thoroughly drowned in chili oil that even the penne is painful to eat.

Remember the Pacific Northwest when it comes to dessert. Its apples are put to delicious use in a crisp—tart apples are covered with a crunchy, nutty topping. And the berry cobbler, made with those marionberries whose name always gets a laugh around here, is a little goopier and its crust is too dense, but it also has a welcome fruity tartness. A

scoop of terrific vanilla ice cream smooths out the wrinkles.

Oysters and dessert: Now that sounds worth a visit. ■

To search more than 100 Phyllis C. Richman reviews by cuisine, price or neighborhood, visit The Post's World Wide Web site at <http://www.washingtonpost.com>.

TURNING TABLES

When chef Gerard Pangaud of Gerard's Place was brought in to oversee the Georgetown Inn's restaurant, he named it Cafe Riviera and imported his friend Gerard Ferri from France to run the kitchen. Now the two have had a disagreement and Ferri has left. In his place, Pangaud has installed 23-year-old Gaelle Thibon Evenou. Born in Condom, France, which is also Jean-Louis Palladin's home town, she came to Washington to work with Palladin at the Watergate, handling the soup and fish stations. She's also worked in the kitchens of Guy Savoy in Paris and Michel Trama in the town of Puymirrol. Most recently she's been cooking at Provence here in Washington, so her culinary mood is likely to fit Cafe Riviera well. —P.C.R.

SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE

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on this spot in eastern Wyoming in 1868. "From this day forward," it began, "all war between the parties to this agreement shall forever cease." The treaty established a Great Sioux Reservation that encompassed most of what is now the Dakotas and Nebraska, plus large chunks of Montana and Wyoming, "for the absolute and undisturbed use and occupation of the Indians." Six years later, however, gold was discovered in the Black Hills, the sacred mountains of the Sioux, which lay in the middle of the reservation. White prospectors flocked in, followed by the 7th Cavalry, commanded by Gen. George Armstrong Custer. In 1876, the Sioux and Cheyenne killed Custer and all of his 266 soldiers. It was a great victory, but a brief one. Within a few years, the Indians had been defeated, and the Great Sioux Reservation was broken up into half a dozen far smaller ones, little Indian islands in an ocean of white-owned land that now included the Black Hills.

Half a century later, the Sioux filed a lawsuit demanding the return of the Black Hills. For decades, the case inched through the federal court system. Finally, in 1980, it reached the Supreme Court. The high court called the theft of the Black Hills a "ripe and rank case of dishonorable dealing," and awarded the aggrieved Indians the sum of \$122 million in compensation for their losses.

But the Sioux did the unthinkable: They refused to take the money. They didn't want it, they wanted the Black Hills. So the money has sat in a bank, gathering interest, growing ever larger. Now there's more than \$300 million there, but the Sioux, who are among the poorest people in America, refuse to touch it.

"We cannot take that money for the land that we love," Yellow Hair explains. "We are ultimately saying that there are some things in the world that are far more important than money. We say that our history is important and the land where our grandfathers envisioned their dreams is important. How can you ask money for those things? That's what keeps us together as a group of people—we continue to talk about the 1868 treaty."

And now, in this windblown tent at Fort Laramie, Yellow Hair is talking about the 1868 treaty and about his efforts to take the Sioux's case to the United Nations.

For more than a decade, he and a handful of other Sioux activists had been traveling to Geneva, as part of the official United Nations committee that wrote the U.N.'s Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The declaration, now working its way through the tortuous U.N. bureaucracy, asserts many rights for indigenous peoples, including "the right to the restitution of the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occu-

pied" and "the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties."

The Sioux are thrilled with the draft declaration. The U.S. government is not. The State Department, which has lobbied for changes in the document, was concerned enough to dispatch a representative to the conference at Fort Laramie—Gare Smith, a boyish 39-year-old deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

"My job is to listen carefully," Smith tells the Indians, "and take back what you say to Washington."

It's the third day of the conference. The hailstorm has long since passed and the day is sunny and warm. The tent is overflowing with Indians, many of them wearing T-shirts bearing a map of the original Great Sioux Reservation and the slogan "The 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty: It's the Law." As is the custom at Indian gatherings, anyone can get up and speak about any subject for as long as he or she wants. For six hours, Smith takes notes while Indians rise to speak. Some cite history. Some cite law. Some quote from the treaty. Some tell stories of suffering at the hands of white people. Some are angry. Some are bitter. Some crack jokes, several of them about Custer. One man gives a lecture on Lakota spirituality and ends by pulling a feather from the band of his cowboy hat and presenting it to Smith.

At one point, an old man clad in a sparkling white buckskin shirt and a head-dress made of huge yellow-tipped feathers walks slowly to the front of the tent. "My name is Joe American Horse, grandson of American Horse, who signed the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868," he says, reading from a typed statement. "I am a member of the Oglala Lakota Nation and I live in the poorest county in America . . . Since 1868, as the people lost their land, we began a socioeconomic collapse that continues to this day. Circumstances of history have brought us to a welfare state that perpetuates dependency and despair . . ."

He keeps reading—one page, two pages, three pages. When he finishes, he ceremoniously signs the speech and solemnly presents it to Smith. But he keeps speaking, off-the-cuff now. "My main concern is myself," he says. "I don't have a job. I'm barely making it from day to day. I'm really pitiful . . ."

At the end of the long day, Smith sits with his hosts and picks at a communal dinner of beef stew and buffalo tripe. He says he's learned a great deal. He says he will report what he's heard to his bosses. He says that the government's position on the draft declaration is still in flux. But, he acknowledges, the State Department is unlikely ever to agree to the provision that calls for the "restitution" of traditional Indian lands.

"That would be most of the United States,"

he says. "That's not something the government is likely to change its position on."

THE WORST FEDERAL AGENCY?

Ada Deer, assistant secretary of interior for Indian affairs. She enunciates the hated word very carefully: *ter-min-ate*. It referred to a government effort to move Indians into the social mainstream. "It meant just what it said, okay? The federal government said you were no longer a federally recognized tribe. For my tribe, the Menominee, it was a cultural, economic and political disaster."

She spreads a map out on the conference table in her office, a huge room in the headquarters of the Interior Department. She points out the Menominee reservation in northeastern Wisconsin, where she grew up in a one-room log cabin with no electricity or running water.

"My tribe was one of the major tribes terminated," she says. "People were no longer eligible for any of the funds or programs available to federally recognized tribal people . . . My sister was in school at the time. She didn't get any money. Luckily, I had a job and I could provide the money for her to complete her last year of college. Hundreds of our people were not able to go to college or vocational school . . . Our tribal government was destroyed. They imposed a state corporation to manage our forests, and basically our right of self-determination was destroyed."

Even now, decades later, there is anger in Deer's voice as she tells the story. She's 61, a large woman in a floral print dress topped with a pink jacket. Behind her glasses, her eyes burn as she tells the story.

"I stopped what I was doing, dropped out of law school and came to Washington and lobbied," she says. In 1973, her work paid off. President Nixon signed a law restoring the Menominee to their status as a federally recognized tribe. It was, she says proudly, "a very historic reversal of American Indian policy."

Now, after a career as a social worker and a college professor, she runs the agency that terminated her tribe, the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Recently, after four years on the job, she submitted her resignation and is now awaiting only the appointment of her successor before she leaves.

The BIA is a huge bureaucracy with a budget of \$1.6 billion and about 12,000 employees, more than 90 percent of them Indians. It exercises enormous political and economic power on many reservations—running schools, police departments and welfare programs and managing the leasing of farming, grazing and mineral rights on tribal lands.

As Deer knows well, the BIA is not universally beloved. "The worst federal agency," U.S. News and World Report called it a few

"In the '50s, it was the policy of the federal government to terminate the tribes," says

years ago, echoing sentiments frequently heard on reservations and on Capitol Hill. Critics in both places say the BIA is mismanaged, inefficient and overly bureaucratic.

Those accusations were underscored in 1994, when an audit revealed that the BIA had lost the records for at least \$2.4 billion that it was supposed to be holding in 1,800 tribal trust accounts. The money was earned by the leasing of Indian lands, but the BIA's accounting process was so abysmal that the funds could not be properly tracked down. Congress appointed banker Paul Homan to investigate. "Honestly," he told a Senate committee last June, "I have never seen anything like it in my 30-year career as a banker."

"The BIA's credibility is at an all-time low," Sen. McCain said at that hearing. McCain likes to point out that there have been 1,050 official investigations, reports and studies of the BIA since it was created in 1834, but the bureau is still an "inefficient and paternalistic bureaucracy," as he once put it.

"The Indians hate it, but it just goes on and on," McCain says. "One of the reasons for it is—I'm going to be very blunt—most of the employees are Indians. So they say, 'I'm against the BIA but my uncle and my aunt and my brother all work for the BIA and we don't want them to lose their jobs.'"

Sen. Campbell agrees. Job protection, he says, has become the primary goal of too many BIA bureaucrats. "There's this suspicion among Indians," he says, "that the bureau is not ever going to let them become self-sufficient because that would be the end of the BIA."

Campbell also criticizes the BIA's hiring preference. "The bureau is the only federal agency that reserves the right to hire Indians above anybody else whether they're qualified or not," he says. "Even if the heart might be in the right place, it's not very smart to hire somebody just because they're red . . . So there's dead wood that's been around too long under Indian preference. I can tell you, being Indian, that Indians bristle when you say that. But I do say it."

Ada Deer listens to a list of these attacks on her agency and then she starts to giggle. She raises her hands over her head, miming the act of surrender. "Hey, I admit it," she says, laughing. "I'm guilty. It's all my fault."

Then she gets serious. "I feel there has been tremendous scapegoating of the BIA by Indians as well as non-Indians," she says. She acknowledges that there is "an element of truth" in Campbell's critique of Indian-preference hiring but says that it makes sense to seek out Indians to work on Indian problems. She concedes that the BIA mishandled tribal leasing funds over the past several decades, but, she adds, "the bureau has never had sufficient funds to have the proper equipment and personnel to do the job."

In fact, she says, most of the problems at

not enough money. The gap between the Indians' needs and the agency's resources has been the main frustration of her job.

"It's not rocket science to solve some of these problems: We need more money invested in education, in economic development, in housing," she says. She's very serious now, very intense. "This whole country was Indian country. Through treaties, Indians have ceded millions of acres of land. This is the wealth on which this country is based. In return for ceding these lands, many of the treaties specify that the federal government will provide education, health, protection. So the amount of money the federal government provides tribal people is minimal considering the vast amounts of wealth the land has generated for the dominant society. I believe the government should take a Marshall Plan approach to Indian affairs. After World War II, they invested to help Europe get back on its feet. Well, there's never been that type of effort devoted to American Indians. Believe me, the tribes are ready for this."

GAMBLING ON GAMING

There are golden shovels and silver hard hats, balloons and TV cameras—the usual accouterments of the official groundbreaking—and the governor of Iowa, Terry Branstad, is on hand to make a speech. "We're very appreciative of the Winnebago tribe," Branstad says. "We're very appreciative of the investment they're making."

Lance Morgan likes that: The governor is thanking Indians, instead of Indians thanking the governor. It feels good to be on the other side of the money equation.

Morgan is the president of Ho-Chunk Inc., which is the development arm of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska. The ground being broken here in Carter Lake, Iowa, will soon hold Ho-Chunk's fourth motel. It's part of the tribe's plan to use its dwindling casino profits to fund more stable business ventures.

"This is an attempt on our part to diversify our investments from gaming," Morgan tells the crowd. "We have a lot of short-term problems on the Winnebago reservation, but the tribe has decided to set in place a plan for long-term growth."

The story of the Winnebagos illustrates the power and the problems of Indian gaming. Forcibly moved four times during the 1800s—from Wisconsin to Iowa to two places in Minnesota to South Dakota—the Winnebagos finally settled on their current reservation along the Missouri River in eastern Nebraska in 1863. They did not thrive there. By the time the Indian Gaming Regulation Act was passed in 1988, the reservation—home to about 1,200 of the tribe's 3,500 members—had an unemployment rate of more than 60 percent, as well as most of the social maladies associated with poverty.

bling, the Winnebago tribal council reluctantly voted to go into the casino business.

But it wasn't easy. The law permits tribal casinos only when the state government agrees, and Nebraska, which is conservative on gambling issues, would not sign a compact with the Winnebagos. That would have ended the tribe's plans right there, except for a little quirk of geography: A shift in the Missouri River had left a tiny slice of Winnebago land on the Iowa side of the river. Iowa, more open in gaming policy, agreed to permit a casino, and in April 1992 the tribe opened "WinnaVegas" in the tiny town of Sloan, Iowa.

The casino was an immediate success, providing jobs for more than 100 Winnebagos and generating about \$15 million in

NOW, THE GOVERNOR IS THANKING INDIANS, IN- STEAD OF THE OTHER WAY AROUND. IT FEELS GOOD TO BE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MONEY EQUATION.

profits for the tribe in its first full year of operation. By 1994, it was producing \$18 million a year. Under the leadership of tribal chairman John Blackhawk, the Winnebagos used their new wealth for improvements on the reservation—building a senior citizens center and a 12-unit apartment building while funding educational reforms, a day-care center, a podiatry service credited with preventing many diabetes-related amputations, a Winnebago language and cultural program and, beginning this year, a tribal college. The results were impressive—high school test scores rose while the unemployment rate fell below the national average.

"It's not Ozzie and Harriet," says Morgan, "but it's getting better."

Unfortunately, the fat years didn't last. In 1995, Iowa liberalized its gambling laws, and soon there were riverboat casinos on the Missouri and slot machines at Iowa race-tracks. The competition caused WinnaVegas's profits to drop from that peak of \$18 million a year to the current rate of about \$9 million. Now, gambling interests are lobbying for changes in Nebraska's gaming laws, which would mean more competition for the Winnebagos.

"If gaming pops in Nebraska," says Morgan, "our business could be lost."

But the Winnebagos have planned for that possibility. They'd always suspected that whites wouldn't permit them to maintain a monopoly in a business as profitable as gambling. "Anything we've ever had of value has been taken away," Morgan says. Consequently, while the tribe was spending half its profits on the reservation, it was in-

funds, 20 percent in Ho-Chunk. As president of Ho-Chunk, Morgan has a mandate to use gambling revenue to create alternatives to gambling, and to do it fast.

"We're in as big a hurry as we can be," he says. "We don't know how long we have."

Right now, he's barreling down Interstate 80, going from a Ho-Chunk-owned Ramada motel in Omaha, where he spent the night, to a Ho-Chunk-owned Ramada motel in Lincoln, which is in the final stages of construction.

Morgan, a 28-year-old Winnebago with a Harvard law degree, investigated various industries before betting the tribe's money on motels. They cost about \$2 million to build, he says, but once they get going, they're relatively easy to run and quite profitable. Now, he envisions a Ho-Chunk motel empire with a headquarters on the reservation. "Our goal is to have as many Winnebagos moving through our management program as we can," he says. "The talent's there; we just need to nurture it."

He pulls off the highway in Lincoln and parks outside the blue three-story building that will soon be a 64-room motel. He announces that he's just thought of an advertising slogan for a chain of Indian motels: "Cheap, clean and politically correct." He bursts out laughing, then goes inside to inspect the new construction.

'AS LONG AS THE SUN RISES AND THE WATER FLOWS'

"In those days, nobody wanted to be on the Indian Affairs Committee," says Sen. McCain. He's talking about 1987, when he arrived in the Senate.

"We had to beg people to be on the committee, promise them they could have their own staffer, blah blah blah. Then 'Dances With Wolves' comes out and it becomes the most popular committee. Everybody wanted to be on it. We went from five Democrats and three Republicans to nine and seven. We went from nobody wanting to be on the committee to everybody wanting to be on the committee."

But that enthusiasm faded as fast as a Hollywood fad. "I can tell you in all candor, attendance on the committee is minimal," says McCain, who still sits on the committee. "We get a very poor turnout and we have trouble getting quorums."

McCain is passionate about Indian issues, and he gets peeved at the apathy and ignorance he sees in Congress. "We have a whole generation of legislators who haven't got a clue about Native Americans, about the clause in the Constitution that says Congress has a special responsibility in dealing with Native Americans. They don't know what treaties were signed. They have no idea. So we get the standard: 'Why can't they be citizens? Why can't they be like us?' Well, they

are. But I didn't sign those treaties. I didn't fill them out. I didn't say that we will take care of their health, education and feeding as long as the sun rises and the water flows and the grass grows. I didn't say that. But the United States of America did."

McCain is the rare pol who retains his capacity for outrage, and he is outraged by broken promises. "The hospital on the Hopi reservation—when did we first commit to that?" he asks angrily, speaking of the northern Arizona tribe. "Sometime in the '70s. Here we are, 20 years later, the Hopis still don't have a hospital on the reservation. We promised them a school and a hospital. I don't know how many years it took to get a school, but they still don't have a hospital."

For years, McCain's main adversary on the Indian Affairs Committee has not been the ranking Democrat, Daniel Inouye of Hawaii, but one of McCain's fellow Republicans, Slade Gorton of Washington. Gorton is the '90s version of Gen. Custer—the man Indians love to attack. In the '70s, Gorton, then attorney general of Washington, fought Indian tribes in seven controversial cases (involving fishing rights and taxation powers, among other issues) that reached the U.S. Supreme Court. The animosity has only increased during Gorton's career in the Senate, where he has advocated deep cuts in the BIA budget as well as restrictions on the powers of tribal governments and a one-year moratorium on new Indian gaming licenses.

"We have, with the American Indian, the longest-term welfare program of any American citizens," Gorton says. "The federal government has run a paternalistic system for nearly the entire history of the United States. It's that system that has been a failure. It seems to me that the focus of the federal government should be to encourage a greater degree of self-sufficiency and self-determination on the part of Indians."

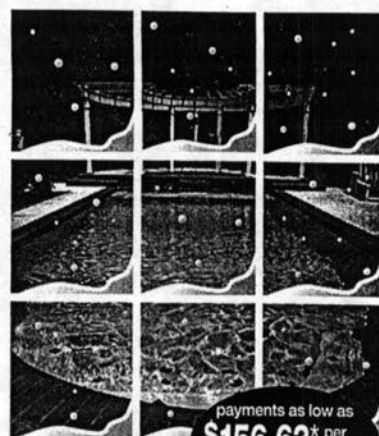
McCain does not quarrel with that sentiment. The dispute between the two men arises over just how to bring about self-determination. McCain proposes that each tribe be permitted to receive block grants in lieu of services now performed by the BIA. Under his plan, one tribe might choose to run its own schools while letting the BIA run the police department. Another tribe might choose the opposite. Gorton disagrees: "Sen. McCain's idea is to allow each of the tribes to get the degree of independence it wants. I think that's way too elaborate, because you've got several hundred Indian tribes and it anticipates that there will be a different agreement with each tribe."

Instead, Gorton proposes that each tribe get two choices—either the BIA would run all services on the reservation or the tribe would run them all. That's in the short run. In the long term, he says, "I would look forward to the ulti-

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McCain, opposes Gorton's all-or-nothing approach. So does Campbell, McCain's successor as chairman. "You can't put all the tribes in the same basket," Campbell says. "Some are very politically and economically astute and very capable of handling their own affairs. But some tribes, who are far from urban areas—who are out in the woods, so to speak—don't have the sophistication and the expertise. I think it's dangerous to say that because one tribe can do it, they all can."

Campbell says he'll continue his predecessor's policy of encouraging tribes to move toward self-determination in slow, steady steps. "The movement has been toward self-determination, but it was limited self-determination," he says. "If they could handle it, they could do it. That's the kind of thing I support. If they're capable, let them go out and do it."

But, Campbell concedes, he has no magic solutions to the problems on Indian reservations. "I don't know," he says. "Nobody knows. We pick at it. We provide bits and pieces. We try to provide something for counseling kids or alcoholism or old people. But as a societal problem, I don't think anybody knows. If we knew, God, we would have fixed it long ago. Nobody knows. I frankly think Indians are making progress and are working themselves out of a lot of societal problems. But it's so slow in coming and there are so many tragic losses of wonderful Indian youngsters along the way."

['THE GATES OF HEAVEN'] Michael Sierra downshifts and steps on the gas, and his van bounces up the rutted dirt road that climbs the rugged hills of the Pine Ridge reservation. Up ahead, the road passes between two huge white boulders that glimmer in the bright sunlight. "I call this the Gates of Heaven," he says.

A tall, 37-year-old Oglala Sioux with a chiseled face, broad shoulders and a ponytail that hangs almost to his waist, Sierra is heading toward the experimental farm he runs on 600 acres in these hills, telling his life story as he goes.

"My mother drank herself to death and my father died young," he says. He grew up at Pine Ridge, strutting through school with the swagger of the star athlete. One day in the '70s, Bill Bradley came to Pine Ridge to put on a basketball clinic and asked for volunteers for a foul-shooting contest. Sierra stepped forward and matched the New York Knicks star shot after shot after shot. Finally, Bradley missed and Sierra hit the winner. "I whupped him," he says, grinning broadly as he drives.

Bradley was impressed—"I saw him as a leader," he recalled in his memoirs—and offered to send this Indian orphan to a fancy New Hampshire prep school. Sierra ac-

complished the Kimball Union Academy. He lasted a year, his junior year, but never returned. Instead, he hung around the rez and, like so many young Indians, drifted into drink and drugs. For several years, he stumbled around drunk, panhandling, stealing, sleeping wherever he passed out.

"In order to get out of that," he says, "I found religion." The religion he found was the Lakota faith of his ancestors, as taught by a medicine man named Sam Moves Camp. "For 264 nights straight," he says, "I wandered these hills and I prayed."

The hills he wandered are beautiful this day, carpeted with swaying golden grass and dotted with dark green pines and aspens with yellow leaves that tremble in the wind. Sierra coaxes his van up the rough, gully-pitted road, then slams on the brakes. He backs down the hill a few yards and

'WE HAVE A WHOLE GENERATION OF LEGISLATORS WHO HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE ABOUT NATIVE AMERICANS,' SAYS MCCAIN. '... THEY HAVE NO IDEA.'

points out a rattlesnake sunning itself in the grass. Then he guns the van forward again, up the hill to the farm.

"There's one of our wind turbines," he says. "Its job is to move the water out here."

He passes a couple of trailers and keeps climbing. "We're trying to get a community of alcohol- and drug-free people," he says. "It doesn't matter what tribe they're from, as long as they're willing to work."

He parks the van next to two small brown houses set into the south side of a rocky hill, protected from the cold north wind. Built by Sierra and scores of volunteers, the houses have thick walls made of bales of hay covered by cement and adobe. He steps into one house. It's one long room with a couple of beds, a couch, a propane heater and kerosene lamps to supply light until the solar panels mounted on the hill outside are up and running. The walls are paneled with thick, rough timbers cut from the trees on these hills, and they scent the house with the smell of sap.

Sierra steps outside, into a root cellar built into the hillside, where wooden boxes hold the fruit of this year's harvest—squash, melons, potatoes, cucumbers, zucchini. "We have three freezers we filled," he says, "plus the stuff we gave away."

This is just the beginning of Sierra's dream. He envisions a self-sustaining communal farm producing healthy food for the reservation, a farm that combines ancient Sioux traditions with the latest in solar and wind technologies, a project that will inspire other Oglalas to self-

decade ago, he has created a foundation, raised seed money in the form of grants from the Kellogg Foundation and the Administration for Native Americans, and started this project, using mostly volunteer labor, a lot of it his own. It's just one of various self-help projects on Pine Ridge, little candles in the darkness of the reservation. There are also Oglala Lakota College and KILI radio, "the Voice of the Lakota Nation," and the Lakota Fund, which makes small loans to help entrepreneurs start businesses on the reservation.

"We're talking about taking responsibility for yourself," Sierra says. "A lot of people want people to do it for them. We can put them to work in their own communities. People need to be working side by side with their kids. My 16-year-old son has worked construction here for four years."

He climbs back into the van, drives down a hill to the foundation's 2½-acre garden. It's after the harvest now, and the tomato and cabbage plants are shriveling. A couple of pigs have buried their heads in rotting pumpkins, and they're snorting with satisfaction. "We're going to eat these guys in a bit," Sierra says, smiling.

He walks over to the compost pile, picks up a handful of rich, brown dirt. "Now, that's good soil." He points out a row of white boxes, each one holding a beehive. "We'll produce 340 pounds of honey next year," he says, walking through the flower garden where the bees sup.

He strolls into the greenhouse, where produce is piled next to a rack of barbells. He inspects a stack of melons, chooses a fat yellowish-green one and thumps it with his thumb, producing a rich drumbeat. "This guy's going home tonight," he says. He carries it back to the van and drives off through the hills.

Along the way, he starts talking about the sun dance. He stops the car, as if the subject is too serious to discuss while driving. "It's not for everybody," he says. "It brings clarity to your thoughts. It's where a lot of what you're seeing here comes from."

He describes the ritual—dancing for four days and nights with no food and just a few brief breaks for rest. You get sunburned and so cotton-mouthed that you can't swallow, he says. Your teeth get loose and your hair starts to fall out. It's frightening.

"You're offering your body to God for what you want," he says, "for good health, for understanding, for the coming generation."

He looks out through the windshield. Down the hill, he can see his teenage son, Shaw, shirtless in the warm afternoon, digging post holes just outside a corral where six horses graze, flicking their tails in the air.

"This," he says, "is what was prayed for in that dance." ■

Peter Carlson is a staff writer for the Magazine.