

February 3, 1991

You have asked us for a direction. We have now prepared something for you to consider. These words are not meant to injure anyone or to cause bad feelings amongst us. But it is necessary to say these word, so we can begin to build a road to a unified nation and a better understanding amongst all our people. We do not see a marriage of Confederacy Council and Band Council as the mechanism to create a better future for our people. Nor is that the foundation ~~from~~ ^{from} which our treaties are built. Before we can embark on a journey with one mind we must also set a few guidelines for ourselves that must be ratified by all of our communities in the days ahead. Along with our guiding principles that we issued yesterday, we now outline the areas where the Confederacy Chiefs must have exclusive jurisdiction in all our communities.

They are:

1. The Great Law and its laws —
2. Our land
3. Our treaties —
4. International Relationships in regard to war and peace, commerce and taxation
5. Membership
6. Installation of Chiefs —
7. Maintenance of all of our ceremonies —
8. Justice and Law.

It is difficult to work together with elected council committees regarding these issues because the way in which we must conduct our business is different than elected band councils. These councils must work within the context of the Canadian government and its laws. We the chiefs, must work on a nation to nation basis, not as a son to a father. Our committees may take another form as our internal mechanisms are different than Indian Act councils. If you can come to agree that we the chiefs will have exclusive jurisdiction in these areas than we can come to the beginning of building a better road for our people. Let us remind you we are the family of one great long house and we are all related, one people. Although our paths have taken different directions in the past, we the chiefs of the confederacy have contempt for no one. Nor do we want to exclude any groups or individuals as long as they agree to live by the principles of the Great Law and to follow the path as laid out for us by the Peacemaker. We have before us the opportunity to once again become a strong and unified nation. We must not fail as this opportunity for us to unite may never come again.

8 Points of Jurisdiction

This is a Draft only, your comments and additions are welcome

1. Great Law	Given to our people by The Peacemaker who was sent by Our Creator. The Great Law established the Confederacy Council as our way to address and resolve any issues that affect our people
	Meant to promote Peace, Respect and Unity to all Nations
	Provides methods and procedures for our various Nations and Territories to function with "One Mind". Our Law provides that we all act as One Body, One Head, One Mind and One Heart
	Under The Great Law, The Confederacy Council can provide shelter/protection to all people who agree to follow the rules established
	Defines roles and responsibilities of Chiefs, Clanmothers, Faithkeepers, and People
	Provides checks and balances to prevent abuses of power
2. Lands	Under The Great Law, The Confederacy Council has the responsibility to protect the land and environment for our future generations. Any dealings involving land must be governed by the following principles
	According to our rules, all Onkwéhon:we Nations have equal rights to share Mother Earth's bounty. Also have equal responsibility to protect and preserve the earth and what She holds
	Land is not meant to be individual property. It is for us all to take care of and must be respected by all
	Land has always been for our collective use and benefit. Our land is not limited to "reserves".
3. Treaties	The Confederacy Council and the parties involved are the sole inheritors of the historical Treaties made by our Ancestors. All Treaties are based from Our Laws (i.e. The concept of Peace, Friendship and Good Minds)
	Protection of our Nationhood
	Protection of Land and Land Rights
	Unlawful for any individual Nation to engage in a Treaty with other Nations in the world. Our Law provides that we act with One Body, One Head, One Mind, and One Heart. All of our Nations are One Family, bound together in Peace.
	Ability to act as a Free and Independent Nation
4. International Relationships	As a Sovereign Government, The Confederacy Council has sole jurisdiction over International Relationships and is guided by the following principles
	Promoting Peace and Friendship
	Protecting who we are as Nations
	Ability to decide for ourselves, as Nations what we feel is best for our people, guided by The Great Law
	Maintaining and Renewing Treaty relations with other Nations. Also the ability to establish new Treaty relations with other Nations in the world.
	Ensuring our voices are heard internationally on matters affecting our people, our environment.

8 Points of Jurisdiction

5. Membership	The Confederacy Chiefs are positioned standing in a circle with their arms locked together. The people (membership) are protected inside that circle. Any person wishing to leave or enter the circle must pass through under their locked arms (must go through Confederacy Council)
	Instructed by Our Creator to determine what Nation and Clan we are by following our mother
	Membership is determined and protected by the Council of Chiefs and supported by the people. (Families have the responsibility to educate their children properly)
6. Installation of Chiefs	The Condolence Ceremony was established at the formation of The Great League of Peace as the method of replacing Chiefs that are lost through death
	Clanmothers have the responsibility to select her candidate who meets the criteria of being a Chief
	The whole Confederacy must be involved because a Chief is working for all of our people
	The Chiefs and Clanmothers of each Nation have jurisdiction of the Chief Titles in their Nation, especially in situations where families can no longer look after the Chief title they have
	A Chief's term of office is for life, and can only be terminated by death or dehorning
7. Ceremonies	Responsibility of the Chiefs, Clanmothers, Faithkeepers and people to uphold and conduct the ceremonies throughout the year
	Chiefs and Clanmothers work together to keep the people in their Clan / Family strong in our ways
	Clanmothers and Women Faithkeepers are responsible to provide names for the newborn babies in their clan
	Names are given at the Ceremonies at Midwinters and at the Big Harvest Ceremonies
8. Justice/Law	The responsibility of keeping the people at peace lies in the hands of our Chiefs, as set down in Our Great Law Of Peace (The Chiefs are to speak to the people about Peace)
	The Confederacy Council has made International Treaties in matters relating to murder, rape and theft, where any of our people are proven guilty
	All other criminal and civil matters fall in the jurisdiction and responsibility of the Confederacy Chiefs, as agreed to and confirmed by the Two Row Wampum

PRINCIPLES OF THE GREAT LAW

1. The first principle that we must follow is that the Great Law was established to promote the ideas of Peace, Power and Righteousness amongst our people. So therefore **any agreements we create must also be acceptable to all of our people so as not to cause discord.**
2. The second principle that we must follow is that when the Great Law was established we abolished our weapons of war and replaced those weapons with the power of the Good Mind. So, therefore in our deliberations we must insist that the people come in good faith to talk and negotiate an acceptable solution to our problems, and not come with a vision as to why we should once again pick up our weapons as a way of solving our differences.
3. The third principle we must follow is the principle established in the sacred circle of 50 Chiefs. The sacred circle means that all 50 Chiefs have now joined hands to form a large and lasting circle whereby all laws, customs, traditions, language and beliefs of the people are contained. There is a tremendous responsibility for each and every Chief to see that this circle is kept intact so as to protect the interests of our culture and its Constitution.
4. The fourth principle we must follow is that we are a Nation and all of our agreements with the Crown and other governments have been as allies and friends. **We cannot create any new agreements that will leave our people subject to the laws of another Nation.**

In conclusion, what we are saying is that we are prepared to work with anyone who is seriously seeking to re-establish a Hodenosaunee Community that is based on the our four guiding principles.

POSITION PAPER ON SELF GOVERNMENT
FROM THE HODENOSAUNEE
AT GRAND RIVER
WOODLAND CULTURE CENTRE
FEBRUARY 2,3 1991

1

With the passage of the British North American Act of 1867, the British Crown delegated to the Dominion of Canada the authority to legislate laws for Indians and lands reserved for Indians. This delegation of powers from the Crown to the Dominion Government of Canada, took place without the consent of the Six Nations Confederacy who at the time, and up to this day maintain that we are allies to the Crown and not subjects to the Crown.

In 1869 this power to legislate laws for Indians and lands reserved for Indians manifested itself in what was called the Indian Advancement Act. The overall intent of this Act was not to promote an autonomous self ruling Race of People in Canada known as Indians, but to produce a group of second class citizens, that the Government hoped would eventually be absorbed into the social fabric of what is now Canada.

In 1870 the Confederacy met with representatives of 21 different Nations at the Council House in Ohsweken, to discuss the possible acceptance of the Indian Advancement Act. At that time, the overwhelming majority of the representatives present concluded that the Indian Advancement Act was of no benefit to our people and was totally rejected. That was the position of the Confederacy then and that is the position of the Confederacy at Grand River now. We formally accept no part of the Indian Act

or versions of the Indian Act.

Throughout the years this Act has regulated all aspects of Indian life in Canada and has been the root cause of many serious economic and social problems our people have been forced to live with.

From time to time the Government of Canada has proposed changes to the Indian Act. Changes that they insist would be beneficial to all Indians. However, these changes of making us full Canadian Citizens would only be beneficial to the Canadian Government.

The White Paper Policy of 1969 was a prime example of the Governments attempt at disguising the same assimilation ideas that were the spirit and intent of the very first Indian Advancement Act. But as we know the White Paper Policy was rejected by all of Indian Canada. Ironically, the White Paper Policy had the opposite effect. It united the Indians of Canada for the first time and gave birth to the National Indian Organization Movement.

From the National Indian Organization Movement emerged the ideas of self rule, self determination, local control and sovereign nations, which led to the struggle of all Indians in Canada to define the question of Aboriginal Rights.

It is within this context that we feel Canada has again devised a plan called "Self Government" that would not only appease the appetite for self rule and local control, but would at the same time complete their goals as first stated in the

Indian Advancement Act of 1869. That is to assimilate our people into the Canadian social fabric and at the same time extinguish our rights as outlined in the many historical treaties we now have and from which we still receive many benefits.

The current double thrust Government policy of "Self Government" and "Devolution" are nothing new to us. They are the same principles we seen in 1869 and in 1969. They may be different and sound exciting to some, but to us they are nothing more than a wolf in sheeps clothing, and that we see as dangerous.

We refer to these policies as sheeps clothing because it will allow for some of our people in their communities, to borrow the principles of the Great Law in order to construct a self government model that would then be under the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada. As Chiefs of the Confederacy it is our obligation to ensure that our status as allies to the Crown as laid out in the Two Row and Friendship treaties be maintained and not ended.

Therefore we as the Confederacy at Six Nations have adopted the following position on Self Government.

The Six Nations Confederacy was founded many generations ago here in North America by the Peacemaker to establish a government that would unite the Five Nations and that would be based on the principles of Peace, Power and Righteousness. This Government and it's guiding principles manifest itself in what is known as the Great Law.

Throughout history the Great Law has provided our people with strength and leadership through times of conflict and peace.

The Great Law has also had a significant role to play in the development of the United States of America as many of the principles and symbols of America were borrowed by the founding fathers to develop the Constitution of the United States. Throughout our history, we, Six Nations have with the arrival of the immigrant nations to North America, have entered into nation to nation agreements with the Dutch, French, English and later the United States.

The guiding principles in these nation to nation agreements were laid out first in the Friendship Treaty, and then in the Two Row Wampum Treaty Belts. To this day we the Chiefs of the Confederacy are bound in our rule as chiefs to abide by the principles of the Great Law, Friendship Treaty and the Two Row Wampum. To do otherwise would be equal to violating the Constitution of one's own country.

With the establishment of the Great Law and the Council of Chiefs, our ancestors created a firm foundation from which they built a beautiful Longhouse that has endured many storms and has provided both strength and comfort for many generations past and hopefully many generations yet to come.

From time to time it has become necessary to include additional rafters to our house as the needs of our people become greater and greater.

The Friendship Treaty and the Two Row Wampum are two

examples of how our house has expanded by adding additional rafters. But to ensure that our house remains strong and not crumble we must take great care to ensure that each rafter is as strong as the last one.

Now today, the difficulties in our communities to come to one mind and the pressure from Canada to come up with a model of self government, our people are again seeking refuge from the storm, in the house our ancestors built so many generations ago. And so it appears imminent that new rafters will be needed to accommodate the expanding needs of our communities.

We know that time is short, and the needs are great. but we must be prudent, for what is done tomorrow will surely affect the coming faces.

We the Chiefs of the Confederacy understand the politics of today and we are prepared to work with our people in all our communities to craft these additional rafters. But in return we must ask that the people be also prepared to work with us. We are a

In order to craft these new rafters to our house, it is necessary to first make everyone aware of a set of principles that must guide our work:

1. The first principle that we must follow is that the Great Law was established to promote the ideas of Peace, Power and Righteousness amongst our people. So therefore any agreements we create must also be acceptable to all of our people so as not to cause discord.

2. The second principle that we must follow is that when the

Great Law was established we abolished our weapons of war and replaced those weapons with the power of the Good Mind. So therefore in our deliberation we must insist that the people come in good faith to talk and negotiate an acceptable solution to our problems, and not come with a vision as to why we should once again pick up our weapons as a way of solving our differences.

3. The third principle we must follow is the principle established in the sacred circle of 50 Chiefs. The sacred circle means that all 50 Chiefs have now joined hands to form a large and lasting circle whereby all the laws, customs, traditions, language and beliefs of the people are contained. There is a tremendous responsibility for each and every chief to see that this circle is kept intact so as to protect the interests of our culture and its Constitution. Therefore any agreements that are concluded must reflect and promote all the interests of the Hodenosaunee people.

4. The fourth principle we must follow is that we are a nation, and all of our agreements with the Crown and other governments have been as allies and friends. We cannot create any new agreements that will leave our people subject to laws of another nation.

In conclusion what we are saying is that we are prepared to work with anyone who is seriously seeking to re-establish a Hodenosaunee Community that is based on and accordance with our 4 guiding principles.

If there is anyone in this room who is under the impression

that this Confederacy is prepared to accept a mere transition of power from the Band Council to the Confederacy Council, under the terms of Canadian Law, then there is a serious misunderstanding of what the Confederacy Council sees as its role in the Relationship to the Government of Canada.

And so if there are some misunderstandings we must now begin the dialogue necessary to clear up any misconceptions.

We are all of one mind about several things:

We agree that we must put our minds together for the sake of the coming faces: for our children and the generations to come.

We agree that we are stronger as one people, united, than as many small communities, scattered and separate.

We agree that the source of our rights and our truest protection lies in the Great Law of Peace that was given to us, and which binds us together.

We agree that the Band Councils created by Canada under the Indian Act are not our natural form of government. We agree that the Indian Act is not the basis of our relations with the Crown or with Canada.

We agree that the settler governments are not going to go away, and that we need to clarify our relations with Canada for the future. We agree that our past treaties should form the basis of these future relations.

We agree that our relations with Canada would be best based on Canada's recognition of our rights as one people.

We agree that our best protection, as symbolized by the Two Row Wampum, is for our allies to remain close to us, but to keep a constant and respectful distance, to keep their big feet out of our fragile canoe.

We agree that we need to preserve and protect our languages and culture for future generations. We agree that we can do this more effectively together than separately.

We agree that these are troubled and troubling times, and many of us have suffered hurts and grievances. We all look to the ideals of the Confederacy, of the Great Peace and the Great Law and the Good Mind, to bring us together again, in strength.

Some of us ask: "Who will protect us?". Others ask: "How can we protect ourselves?"

Most of us can see the shining dream that the Great Law of Peace has given us, the picture of how things should be.

It is time to turn from these agreements to practical, honest ways of moving from where we are today to where we want to be.

There should be specific groups created to prepare practical reports on three issues. They are the most important issues that face us, and we should not try to do too much at once.

1. Internal Relations and Government: How do we move from Band Councils under the Indian Act to Haudenosaunee governments under the Great Law?

This committee can examine the questions of how each community would be represented in a functioning Confederacy government; which issues are properly the jurisdiction of the Confederacy Council, which issues are matters for the Confederacy Council to set the principles and community governments to implement, and which issues are matters internal to each community; how the day-to-day administration of the laws and the provision of services to the people should be carried out.

2. External Relations: What are our proper relations with Canada and its provinces, and how can we achieve those relations as one people united?

In particular, how can we create a relationship with Canada which would recognize and implement our rights without suggesting that Canada's law govern our internal affairs? How can we ensure that our past relations with the Crown are properly recognized, and that our just land and other claims are fairly dealt with?

3. Education, Language and Culture: In which ways can our communities work together to set up the cultural and educational systems that will ensure that we continue to survive as Haudenosaunee?

These reports can be prepared by March 15, and sent to the traditional and elected governments of each community---including the ones not represented here today---and other interested people. Two weeks after that, we can meet again to discuss the reports.

The reports should contain two separate sections: the first should be a set of basic principles that can be accepted or rejected; the second should be a series of practical steps that can be taken to implement the principles.