

Fact:

The government has proposed a navigation station and site for Alcatraz since it has a central location in the Bay and would be ideal for navigational purposes.

The Indians on Alcatraz have long been aware of the islands unique geographical location. In fact, when the government cut off our water and electricity to spite us and discourage our occupation, we made a press release to the public, at that time, that the government had just increased a navigational hazard and we were going to look and act above their short comings and turn the lighthouse back on, which we did.

Unfortunately, we were unable to continue our efforts to keep the lighthouse going because of our problems with the generator, lack of sufficient funds for gasoline and needed supplies for the island and our boat problems added on. We had managed to keep ourselves and our occupation going which we have regarded as important.

During our anniversary celebration, we released to the press as part of our plan to establish on the island, a spiritual center including our needs for an all Indian University and Cultural Center. The only remaining structure after demolition would be the lighthouse or navigation station. The lighthouse would be redressed in totem design as the true statue of Liberty representing Freedom for world wide Peace.

At present, the government released their plans to make Alcatraz a navigational site. We have had every intention of doing such as we have indicated. However, the government lied to us when they used "Ellis Island" as their negotiating instrument to contract from the government on a five year lease. They lied to us by first saying they could not give us formal title because we would set a precedent for other racial groups to do the same thing which is an outright lie. The "Indians" are the first and only people whose ancestors can call this country home. Then the government gave the Blacks Ellis island after a 13 day occupation hoping to instigate racial competition. Dr. Thomas Mathews from Ellis island was sent to us as the negotiating instrument to show us the "progressive way" of getting an island which was for us to contract from the government to operate the lighthouse by permit. We rejected the offer. Through this proposed contract, we would only be employees for the government under contract to operate the lighthouse or navigation site avoiding the whole issue of title which is the reason why we are here on Alcatraz. The government has lied to us by not honoring one treaty that was to last forever, let alone, a five year permit and they continue to lie to us in relationship to Indian problems nation wide. President Nixon's message to Congress inaguarating a new policy of self-determination for Native peoples of our country is a lie like many others made to us and to your own people if he does not follow through with programs initiated by peoples of this country.

We are formally proposing at this time to take a contract from the federal government to operate the navigation site by title and not permit. We would like our non-profit incorporation of Indians of All Tribes to be granted federal and state tax exempt status and title given to Indians of All Tribes Inc. We will set up in cooperation with formal title ownership, a national Indian board of directors, statewide representatives, and the immediate Bay Area Indian Community organization as trustees of the estate to ensure responsible operation for immediate navigational site and future spiritual center.

Indian people have always been concerned about the care of our natural resources because we lived in harmony with nature. It's a shame that the oil incident which resulted in the death of much marine, plant and animal life and increased contamination of our waters had to happen before the public and government wanted action. You may call it Ecology, but for us it is our life and we do not want any more harm or destruction done.

Steps we can take or alternative solutions must present itself as holds true for any Indian Community or reservation. If we continue to sit then we are telling our people where ever they are, that they must just sit too. The whole action of taking an island was symbolic in telling the American government and the American people that they are not going to continue to steal our lands nor are they going to tell us what to do.

We are contradicting our whole move of liberation if we just sit and wait for the government. We are Indians who want action and we can not let the government continue to ignore us. We cannot let Alcatraz die because just as it was symbolic in reawakening Indian consciousness and bringing attention to the Indian people, it will be symbolic of our death if Alcatraz should die.

What can be done in order for us to light a fire under the government?

We must proceed down the only routes that have been left open for us and use it to our advantage. We claimed Alcatraz on the basis of the 1868 treaty between the government and the Sioux. The treaty says that federal surplus land will revert back to the Indian people. The Sioux originally staked the claim in 1964 for all Indian people. In 1969 we landed on the island in added support of the Sioux treaty and other legal grounds. This is the only route that the government and the American public can understand which will force them to recognize and honor not only one treaty but all the moral and legal claims of all Indian peoples. If Alcatraz goes into the courts, we can bring in Indian people to testify on all the injustices that has made Alcatraz symbolic for freedom to the American Indian. The United States will be put in the position of having to prove that they were here before the Indians. We all know they can not do this. We know every American should be reminded who was here first. There are two things we need. #1. We need title to have a complete and permanent victory and #2. We must start legal proceedings in the court right now because it does not appear that Congress or the President will simply give us title unless public opinion is aroused again. The court will help do this.

Most importantly, if Alcatraz is a land claims issue, which everyone has always regarded it as, then Alcatraz in a sense will be challenging the United States to honor Indian treaty before the whole world. Reservations and Indian groups are ready to move in other areas on suing the government but who ever does first will set a legal precedent for everyone else. Alcatraz is the only one of the groups who has a chance because of international press and publicity too which can open doors for better communications in getting our points across. What ever move the government makes will not be viewed by just the people involved with one isolated case but will be viewed in front of Indians across the continent and non Indians world wide. The United States have got to recognize Indian Treaty in this country or they will be held in question treatywise internationally and again we have exposed their facade if we should lose. There is little chance that we should obtain title through court action but that is not the point. The point is that Alcatraz will spark nation wise attention to land claims issues badly needed to arouse public sympathy for winning land back in troubled areas nation wide such as Black Mesa, Pit River, Salmon River, Black Hills, etc. We can only win in the minds of the public which brings us one step closer to our over all victory.

It is highly improbable that the government will accept the conditions of us operating our own navigation site. That is not the point either. What is the point or important, is the fact that the Indians on Alcatraz have responded to the governments decision with a probable solution sensitive to the navigational needs of the Bay, the needs of Indian people nation wide whose main concentration is self-determination, and winning or at least not losing our public support on the ecology issue. Above all, we can not let the government evade the issue of title which they have tried to ignore along with showing our responsiveness in dealing with the issue, pointing out the governments treacherous game which they have been trying to pull on us and get away with. We can not let the government do this. With both "arrows" aimed in the right direction, we can not help but hit our target if we move. We can't get anywhere waiting for the government to move because the only moves that they will be making is not in our direction and we cannot risk our occupation because of our inability to act at the right times.

The Problems:

- #1. The government will not budge on the Alcatraz issue and are just watching us struggle which is nothing new since they're making a typical response to a typical situation that has been going on for years on the reservation and in the urban Indian communities.
- #2. The government is waiting for us to mar our image, not necessarily faults of individuals but we have succeeded in projecting a negative image. If we turn off public opinion, we are endangering the life of our occupation. It would be very easy for the government to turn off our support on the ecology issue by saying that we are preventing navigational aides necessary for avoiding future accidents in the Bay because of our occupation and our unwillingness to offer a hand on prevention of ecological disasters. We are the true ecology people and can not let the government steal our support because of inability to act.
- #3. We do not have the momentum we had at one time to arouse public support to support our fight for winning title, either through litigation, an act of congress or negotiations.
- #4. We cannot get any large substancial amounts of money for operation costs of any program that we try to set up in order to permanently continue island operations. We can only depend on donations which gives us an unstable foundation to operate on even though we still keep going, no matter what. This is all attributed to the fact that we do not have legal title which protects other agencies who are sympathetic in wanting to give money but are held back because of the title situation.
- #5. The state will not recognize us in granting us our legal incorporation with state and federal tax exempt status. The legal incorporation was set up for the purpose of obtaining our tax exempt status so that we would be able to recieve funds directly to the island without having to go through a conduit agency. If we cannot have our tax exempt status along with our legal incorporation, then we have defeated our purpose of setting up our "legal front". We cannot have one with out the other or else we will be following a non-Indian structure and guidelines.
- #6. Small donations from the average american is what has been keeping the occupation going with the exception of three or four large benifactors who cannot continue to give because they can not write it off their taxes. As our bank account can tell you, we have turned off alot of non-Indian support along with our own people because of our inability to project better public relations. We can not even get volunteer boats because of outright rudeness to the people who are trying to help.
- #7. We released to the press on our anniversery, our proposal along with a timetable that we must follow to some extent otherwise we will be seen as a failure. The legal route will save face for us notbeing able to come through with the six million to begin our operations on the island by February, 71. There must be some form of action going on other than regular operation activities.