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WORKING CONFERENCE ON TRIBAL SELF-GOVERNANCE
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I want to welcome you to the second working conference on Tribal Self-Governance - a demonstration project that holds extraordinary possibilities for Indian tribes and the Federal government. For Indian tribes, it is the new flexibility in the use of Federal resources; for the Federal government it is an opportunity to be a less paternalistic trustee.

The last time I addressed you, I quoted Machiavelli who reminded us that there is nothing more difficult to undertake than to introduce a new way of doing things. The reason for the difficulty is that the innovators have enemies who have done well under the old system. And the innovator's defenders? They are only lukewarm supporters because they are unsure of how well they will do under the new system.

It is from this point that I would like to share a few thoughts.

When a new system is being created, it poses to all of us a choice

- Do I respond positively or negatively to this new idea? How much of a chance do I give it? Do I help it along or hinder its progress?

Today, I would like to suggest that it is the four terrible T's that can keep us all from embracing any new process. The terrible T's are: Tradition, Time, Turf, and Trust. Let me touch briefly on each of these:

Tradition: Self-Governance allows us to do things differently. For the BIA, how money is distributed to the tribes and how the BIA participates in the Federal government fulfilling its trust responsibility are subject to change. For the Self-Governance Tribes, how they redesign their programs and reallocate their Federal resources are subject to change. It is natural to have as our reference point how things were done in the past. Yet, for some of us the past can act as a strong anchor. We need to acknowledge the past but not be bound by it.

Time: Bringing forth a new order takes time and requires extra effort. Unfortunately, there is a period when the new order and the old order exist together requiring us to pull double duty at times. It is easy to resent the extra work and claim that we don't have the time. But what is needed is to balance our responsibilities in operating the existing system with the requirements of the new system.

Turf: Probably the most difficult thing for us as human beings is to let go a portion of our own turf. Self-Governance shifts responsibility away from the BIA to tribal governments. Within Tribal governments, new players can begin to affect the shifting of resources between programs or the redesign of program administration within the tribe. Within the BIA, meeting the Federal government's trust responsibility in new ways may mean letting go some of our procedures and instead focusing ourselves on the status of the trust asset itself.

Trust: Any change requires trust. Questions that are some times voiced but often times thought are: Can the tribes handle the responsibility of self-governance? What do we do when a self-governance tribe decides to retrocede the programs back to the BIA. Or, is the BIA revealing all sources of funds? Is the question or concern being expressed legitimate or is it another way to hinder the program? Open and honest communication can do a lot to build and maintain the level of trust between those of you within the Tribe and those of you within the BIA. And I am convinced, that it is all of us who will collectively design the self-governance program.

Individuals, such as ourselves, will either enhance or retard the development of this program. And what will make the difference will be how we respond to the pressures of tradition, time, turf and trust.

At your last conference, you spent time discussing many issues and questions. Many of these issues remain but there has been progress on some. I would like to highlight some of these.

First, a proposal is nearing completion on delineating the roles and responsibilities of the BIA and the Office of Self-Governance and I understand that you will be discussing this tomorrow.

Second, a person is being employed jointly by the Office of Self-Governance and the BIA Budget Office to address the many details of fund distribution to the self-governance tribes.

Third, a process for requesting and obtaining waivers from BIA regulations has been developed and I encourage self-governance tribes to utilize these procedures in redesigning programs to meet your own set of circumstances.

Fourth, the first ever trust evaluations were completed where the focus was on the status of the trust asset rather than the procedures for administering the trust. This evaluation will serve as a model for my new Office of American Indian Trust which is currently being established.

In a few minutes we will learn more when tribal and BIA representatives present a summary of their experiences operating under self-governance.

Shifting from looking backwards, let me spend a few minutes discussing the future.

We are nearing a point where consideration must be given to what self-governance will look like as a permanent program.

Will there be a base amount that will include a portion of the shortfall funding and some inflationary adjustment for subsequent years as has been suggested in some of your testimonies to Congressman Yates?

What about expanding self-governance to other bureaus within Interior or to other Federal agencies? Will there be one compact with numerous negotiated annual funding agreements or will tribes have a compact with each Federal entity?

Of more immediate concern is working to comply with the Congressional directives to undertake site specific restructuring to accommodate the annual funding agreements. Any proposed restructuring will need to be consistent with what is being proposed by the Joint Tribal/BIA/DOI Advisory Task Force on the Reorganization of the BIA.

We are still in the demonstration phase and as a result, there remain many questions. I encourage all within the tribal governments and within the BIA to continue cooperating and communicating. Continue exploring and trying alternative solutions

to questions and problems. And from an individual perspective, let all of us be aware of how we allow one of the terrible T's, either tradition, time, turf or trust, to stand in our way of bringing forth a new order called Tribal Self-Governance.