

THE FOURTH WAY



*An Indigenous Contribution for Building Sustainable and
Harmonious Prosperity in the Americas*

STAGE 1 – Laying the Foundation

Earth Day, April 22, 2006

Four Worlds International and
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STAGE 1 – Laying the Foundation

This confidential document, *The Fourth Way: An Indigenous Contribution for Building Sustainable and Harmonious Prosperity in the Americas*, was first shared with trusted relatives at the Healing Ourselves, Our Communities, and Mother Earth Spiritual Gathering on Earth Day, April 22, 2006, at the Daybreak Star Cultural Center in Discovery Park, Seattle, WA. It was also simultaneously shared at three other related spiritual gatherings across North America and with trusted relatives via email. Everyone who receives a copy of *The Fourth Way* is empowered with good Prayers, Love, Faith and Trust to share it with those they love and trust. Through this process a network of support and trust will be developed of those who want to participate in the development of *The Fourth Way*. If you would like to participate in one of *The Fourth Way* Organizing Meetings being planned, please email your contact information and any thoughts or suggestions you would like to share to fourthway@unitedindians.com

For nearly 40 years we have been consciously praying for and supporting the manifestation of the Spiritual Foundation and Collective Vision of The Reunion of the Condor and Eagle and the Development of *The Fourth Way* across the Americas and beyond. The foundation of this Sacred Movement began with the Sacred Prophecies and Teachings of the Ancient Ones long before the arrival of Columbus. With the Spiritual Foundation already prepared in many places and by many Relatives, the actualization of Stage 1 will move rapidly and the next three stages will be revealed and fulfilled at the proper time.

The Fourth Way is an effort to address what we view as the unfolding crisis of this new century, a crisis of many dimensions where our Mother Earth and its inhabitants simultaneously face the prospect of environmental degradation, violent conflict, competition for ever scarcer resources and markets, economic insecurity, societal and political upheaval, and an increase in poverty and hopelessness. We view the *Fourth Way* as a “Strategic Security Document” presenting greater potential for peace and security than heavy-handed military or diplomatic approaches. We point to the *Fourth Way* and the Sixteen Principles as laying the foundation for formulating a response that will benefit the entire Human Family.

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THE FOURTH WAY:

INTRODUCTION

AFTER AN IN-DEPTH CONSULTATION PROCESS, BEGINNING IN OCTOBER 2001, WITH INDIGENOUS LEADERS AND COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE AMERICAS (AND BEYOND), AS WELL AS WITH OTHER CONCERNED PARTIES, WE PRESENT THE FOURTH WAY WITH FULL FAITH AND CONFIDENCE THAT IT EMBODIES A SACRED PATH TO ENDING ESCALATING CYCLES OF POVERTY AND VIOLENCE AND HELPING TO BUILD SUSTAINABLE AND HARMONIOUS PROSPERITY ACROSS THE AMERICAS.

WE OFFER THIS OVERVIEW OF THE FOURTH WAY AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION IN THE SEARCH FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE, SECURITY AND HUMAN WELL-BEING IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE. WHAT FOLLOWS IS ADDRESSED TO AND FROM THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE AMERICAS (AND TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES EVERYWHERE) AS WELL AS TO THE GOVERNMENTS, THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES WHOSE POLICIES AND ACTIONS IMPACT THE LIVES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES. IN THIS BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE FOURTH WAY, WE SHOW THAT IT IS IN THE STRATEGIC INTERESTS OF ALL PARTIES CONCERNED TO WORK TOGETHER TO ADVANCE THE SUSTAINABLE AND HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN A MANNER THAT WILL LEAD TO PROSPERITY AND WELLBEING FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN FAMILY.

FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE, THE CURRENT PATH IS ONE OF ESCALATING CONFLICT, CHAOS, VIOLENCE, AND POTENTIAL TERRORISM. WE OFFER THE FOURTH WAY AS A “STRATEGIC SECURITY STRATEGY” FOR ALL CONCERNED BECAUSE WE BELIEVE IT WILL BE FAR MORE EFFECTIVE THAN HEAVY-HANDED DIPLOMATIC OR MILITARY APPROACHES. WE CLEARLY POINT OUT THAT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HAVE THE VISION, THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES, THE GROWING CAPACITY AND COLLECTIVE RESOURCES TO CO-CREATE A PEACEFUL AND HARMONIOUS FUTURE FOR ALL OF OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN, WHILE STAYING CONSISTENT WITH OUR CULTURES AND VALUES. WE SUBMIT THAT INDIGENOUS PEOPLE HOLD AN IMPORTANT KEY TO PEACE, SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE WELL-BEING FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN FAMILY. IN THIS DOCUMENT, WE DISCUSS

THE ISSUES AND OUTLINE A STRATEGY FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF ALL CONCERNED. WE BELIEVE OUR COLLECTIVE FUTURE IS AT STAKE.

***APPENDIX I – THE SIXTEEN PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE AND HARMONIOUS WORLD**

***APPENDIX II- THE HISTORY OF THE SIXTEEN PRINCIPLES**

The Context

The 21st Century was imagined as a time of peace and prosperity. The horrors of the 20th Century, including the scourge of world war and economic hardship, were not to be a part of this bright new century. Communism had fallen and the “The End of History”¹ was announced representing the triumph of the “Washington Consensus” of globalized free market democracy, presided over by transnational corporations and enforced by an ever present, all powerful but benevolent U.S. military. Yes, liberal democracy had “won” and the future was one of capitalism, free markets, privatization, globalization and peaceful relations across an ever “flatter world.”

In this atmosphere of hope and confidence, no one seemed alarmed by the rise of religious fundamentalism in the great Abrahamic religions. Militant Islam, represented by Jihadic fighters, supported and funded by the United States, trained in Afghanistan to combat the Russian invasion, and secretly worked to recruit and train militant fighters from throughout the Middle East. After the Russian withdrawal from Afghanistan, the United States essentially abandoned the region and the Jihadic fighters turned their attention to combating Western influence in the Middle East. Their objectives evolved to include: the removal of Western military bases from the Middle East and ending Western influence in the region, the overthrow of regimes seen as cooperating with Western powers, reducing Israeli influence in the region or the outright destruction of Israel; the alleviation of Palestinian suffering by ending the Israeli occupation; the establishment of a Palestinian state; and the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate. Fundamentalist Christians gained real political influence in the United States as part of the resurgence of the Republican party and supported Fundamentalist Jewish settler movements intent on expanding Israel throughout all of biblical “holy land” representing the fulfillment of the biblical prophesy set out in the book of Revelations. In their view, this would herald the

¹ **Francis Fukuyama**, *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992, 2005), publ. Penguin

coming of “Armageddon,” the Second Coming of Christ and the conversion or death and destruction of all non-Christian believers.

The visit of Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem sparked the second Palestinian Intifada and the renewed horror of suicide bombings across Israel. Terrorist attacks against Western targets became more common with a declaration of “war” against the United States by Osama bin Laden, the presumed head of a shadowy organization, which developed out of the Afghan/Soviet conflict known as “al Qaeda.” Israel began the construction of a wall of separation and expanded settlements on occupied land in the West Bank, worsening conditions for Palestinian People in the Occupied Territories as security measures increased and fear of terrorist attacks grew, not only in Israel, but across the globe.

“Out of the blue” on a beautiful fall day in September 2001, mass terrorism came to New York and Washington and with it the end of the presumption of peace in the new century. The United States has now invaded Afghanistan and Iraq, forcing regime change, and finds itself bogged down more and more in the Middle East as an occupying power battling stubborn insurgencies as costs spiral. Meanwhile, the self-proclaimed leaders of al Qaeda issue tapes and videos taunting the United States for its failure to kill or capture these leaders. The proclaimed multi-generational “War on Terrorism” has stretched many liberal democracies almost to the breaking point from growing tension between freedom and security brought on, in part, by the pressure of asymmetrical warfare represented by home-grown insurgencies and stateless terrorists willing to commit suicide to injure or kill Westerners. Liberal democracy is also threatened by the societal and budgetary pressures resulting from tax cuts and escalating expenditures for military and homeland security. The United States, for instance, now faces rising deficit and debt levels with no end in sight even as additional public funds are shifted from public to private hands through the mechanism of special appropriations for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. also faces growing defense budgets, and huge expenditures for military and reconstruction contracts in Iraq, all in the name of “national security.”

In such an environment, much of the technology of modern war could well be ineffective against a stateless enemy hiding among civilians. The frustration and confusion of how to counter this threat is apparent in the current policies of holding U.S. citizens without charge, warrantless wiretapping, secret prisons where prisoners are held without recourse, claims of torture and renditions to foreign governments that torture, Guantanamo, “enemy combatants,”

“no-fly lists,” the Patriot Act, and recent measures implemented to expand executive power in the United States. In areas of the Middle East where elections have been held, militant factions close to fundamentalist Islamic movements have emerged victorious. In sum, the promise of the 21st Century remains unfulfilled, the concept of liberal democracy itself is in crisis, and this new world is not quite “flat.” Meanwhile, development has not kept pace with population growth in many areas of the world and increasingly large portions of humanity are experiencing development setbacks caused by disease, lack of access to clean water, degradation of farmland, inadequate sanitation, environmental degradation, globalized trade policies and violent conflict.

At the same time, out of sight in the global south, movements opposed to globalization and the “Washington Consensus” -- as represented by the neo-liberal policies of the United States, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank -- were gaining supporters, overthrowing governments, and then, suddenly, winning elections. In Venezuela (which is a major energy producer), Hugo Chavez was elected President on a platform of independence from global capitalism, opposition to globalization and neo-liberalism, all while aligning himself with the poor and the dispossessed, many of whom were Indigenous or mestizo. Announcing the arrival of a “Bolivarian independence movement” to spread across the Americas, President Chavez openly battled entrenched interests aligned with the United States, and traded taunts and slurs with representatives of the U.S. government while overcoming an attempted coup and a recall petition that ultimately added to his political strength and influence both in Venezuela and internationally in the developing world.

Following the change in Venezuela, other leaders aligned with the left won elections in Brazil, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Argentina with mandates to free their countries from the dictates of the International Monetary Fund. Recently, a socialist and a woman won the Presidency in Chile and leftist movements are gaining ground in Ecuador and Peru. These changes are occurring at the same time that China is knocking on the door of resource-rich countries with a shopping list in one hand and a checkbook another. In one example of growing concern, a new BBC Special series examines “How the U.S. ‘lost’ Latin America.” In this context it is important to ask: If Latin America is forced to choose between the shopping list and checkbook of China and the constant economic and political interference of the U.S., which should it choose?

Central to developments in the global south are newly restive and resurgent Indigenous movements in Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico. Most recently, Evo Morales, an Aymara Indian, was elected as the first Indigenous President of Bolivia with the first majority vote that country has seen in years. All eyes are now on Peru, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Mexico. Although armed struggles continue in Colombia, with rebel groups such as ELN and FARC pursuing their multi-decade guerrilla war, focus has now shifted to growing Indigenous political power in the hemisphere. In fact, in every nation-state in the Americas, including the Caribbean, there is some form of an Indigenous movement emerging and joining with others across the Americas.

U.S. Power

The reaction of the United States to all of this is not yet clear. Unfortunately, much of the U.S. diplomatic corps remains in the hands of the old “cold warriors” still fixated on old enemies, such as Fidel Castro, and seemingly oblivious to current challenges including the precipitous decline of U.S. influence in the region. The “War on Drugs” continues as the stated purpose of the U.S. military’s Southern Command as they continue the acquisition of new military bases. The United States military now operates at least 25 bases and land-based radar stations in Latin America and the Caribbean. Known as “Cooperative Security Locations,” these facilities have been set up in Manta, Ecuador, the Mariscal Estigarribia air base in Paraguay, and in numerous locations in Colombia. They all have small staffs but have the ability to expand operations on short notice. Many of these bases are increasingly controversial with the local populations.

Add to this mix the efforts of some countries, such as Venezuela, to improve their military capacity, along with the growing sophistication of Brazil as a weapons supplier, and the potential for conflict seems apparent. It is important to be clear about the form any such conflict would assume. The lessons of the guerrilla struggle in Colombia, Iraq, and, decades ago in Vietnam are all too clear; the United States may be supreme in air power and conventional warfare, but asymmetrical guerrilla tactics can be successful against such a powerful military.

It should be increasingly obvious that the U.S. cannot occupy the world, destroy all opponents with cruise missiles, or successfully combat all local “insurgencies.” Moreover, there is reason to question how long the United States can bear the cost of its huge military

apparatus, including over 175 military installations around the world and an annual military budget of over half a trillion dollars. Already, the U.S. is dependent on eastern economies such as China, Japan and South Korea to fund its debt. Without these purchases of U.S. debt securities, the United States could not fund its military at even a fraction of the current cost, while at the same time maintaining even minimal expenditures domestically. Instead of the U.S. military establishing its dominance via “shock and awe,” a terrible vulnerability has been on display in the Iraqi occupation. It is a known fact that militaries from several countries have placed more emphasis on asymmetrical tactics as a means of blunting U.S. superiority in conventional weaponry. It should not be assumed that future conflicts will resemble past conflicts or that conventional military superiority will lead to success in future wars. In fact, the reality of asymmetrical warfare calls into question the entire “military industrial complex” as presently structured including the renewed emphasis now being placed on Special Forces, “black operations,” propaganda and disinformation campaigns. Also, the increase in civilian surveillance programs could compromise or destroy traditional notions of civil liberties and personal privacy not only in the U.S. but across the globe.

Prosperity

The promise of prosperity in this new century could also be called into question. Hurricane Katrina revealed an impoverished and vulnerable underclass inside the United States that, in our view, represents a ticking time bomb, and a security risk far greater than al-Qaeda. Further afield, the rise of China and India has put great pressure on the developed world. Huge costs and financial imbalances arise from these growing pressures, the resolution of which could greatly lower the standard of living in Canada and the U.S. and potentially destabilize the global financial system. In the U.S., economic growth is increasingly dependent on the use of debt financing. In such a high debt economy, any reduction in wages or the standard of living would be a recipe for economic catastrophe. Increased demand for energy and other resources could increase competition among nation states and lead to greater conflict. Oil, gas and coal are the lifeblood of modern society -- we are literally addicted to oil for every aspect of modern life, including food production. The issue of energy availability and price is not only critical to modern society; shortages could lead to recessions, social upheaval, economic collapse or even world war. We see struggles, in part related to oil, being played out in Iraq, Iran, and many other countries in Africa, South America and Central Asia. Will there be sufficient energy

resources to allow new entrants to the global trading system to prosper, or will there be shortages and conflict? Will the next “war” between nation states be fought on the battlefield, in the cities or urban highways, or in trading rooms as countries use holdings of U.S. debt or strategic resources to gain advantage?

Shifting Demographic Patterns

Demographic changes across the globe will also challenge policy makers in this new century. The developed world is growing old; populations are shrinking in Japan, Russia and the EU countries. Yet the Middle East is experiencing a “youth quake,” where 60% of that region’s population is under the age of 25. Similar statistics are seen in the rest of the developing world. Many social scientists have remarked on the dangers presented by large numbers of young males without employment or the prospect for advancement, and condemned to a life of scarcity and want. Shifting trade alignments and the adoption of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) upended traditional communities and destroyed the livelihoods of peasant farmers who found they could not compete with large subsidized agribusiness corporations. These demographic and economic crises are a substantial cause of “out-of-control” migration from the global south to the U.S. and Canada, with the remaining southern populations increasingly dependent on remittances from migrants in the north. At present there are some 11 million illegal immigrants in the United States alone. Tensions are mounting between this growing population and many in the United States who resent their presence and accuse these immigrants of not paying taxes and putting pressure on social services and wages. In some countries in Central America, a majority of working-age men are now working illegally in the United States. Meanwhile, powerful interests in the U.S. covertly support this migration because it offers cheap labor and a means of holding down wages for legal labor. In the same vein, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Italy, England and other European countries are facing demographic and social challenges from both legal and illegal immigration and the difficult task of integrating restive populations from former colonies when employment opportunities for legal workers are scarce. Many other countries in the Middle East and even Japan are dependent on guest workers and some are experiencing political backlashes against the presence of foreign workers. In the U.S. this backlash is being accompanied by a growing reaction from both sides of the debate including the passage of restrictive and punitive legislation, the organization of border vigilante groups, huge demonstrations and student walkouts. In other

countries we have witnessed violent protests (as in the case of France) by immigrants who are feeling increasingly marginalized in their new homeland. With the rebuilding of the Americas with social justice and economic prosperity for all members of the Human Family, as envisioned by The Fourth Way, the challenge of immigration fueled by poverty and political oppression will be dramatically reduced.

Indigenous Demographics

Indigenous populations across the Americas are also experiencing a baby boom. One cannot visit First Nations communities in Canada and the U.S. without being taken aback by the large numbers of young people and by their growing anger. At present, anger and desperation lead to unusually high levels of suicide among Indigenous young people and the potential for violence is now coming to the surface. Will we allow these trends to fester and become even greater social and political problems, or will we embrace reality, and use these trends as an opportunity to further the well being of all people in this hemisphere?

New reports of a violent but largely overlooked surge in drug use and drug trafficking are coming from reserves and reservations across Canada and the U.S. These reports are especially troubling in communities near international borders with Canada and Mexico including the Lummi Nation, Red Lake, The St. Regis Mohawk Nation, The Black Foot Confederacy and the Tohono O'odhan. **In these situations, there is evidence that established mainstream drug gangs are establishing ties with Indigenous people and local traffickers to facilitate smuggling across international borders.** Mexican drug traffickers are reported to be marrying local Indigenous women and Native Americans are organizing their own mafia like enterprises. As well, Native American gangs across Canada and the U.S. are growing in strength in urban areas, including Vancouver, Winnipeg, Tacoma, Saskatoon, Regina, Oakland, Calgary, Winnipeg, Rapid City, Denver, Toronto, Albuquerque, Minneapolis and extending growing control and influence on reserves and reservations. Addiction to methamphetamine on some reserves and reservations in Canada and the U.S. is reported to be more than 50% of Indigenous young people and is increasing. Meth addiction also dramatically increases tendencies towards violence.

Moreover, these developments are increasingly difficult to deal with, given the lack of resources of rural and tribal police forces, and the deep inter-community loyalty that exists within First Nations, where neighbors are often related to each other. There is also a deep

suspicion and distrust of both the Canadian and U.S. justice systems, thus making investigations, undercover operations and prosecutions extremely difficult to carry out. This is all in contrast to the great strides northern Indigenous peoples have made in the last several decades in strengthening their sovereignty, cultures and economic entrepreneurship.

The Bigger Picture

All of these trends seem to be connected by common threads. These trends included the disruptions caused by modernization and corporate-led globalization which results in the loss of identity, autonomy, and traditional livelihoods that accompany such transitions. Such profound disruptions have led to chronic poverty, and ill-health, structured inequality, increased isolation, alienation and radicalization in many parts of the globe. This is particularly acute where the “losers” of such global changes lack any real opportunity to achieve personal success on terms seen as “fair” and compatible with their culture and values. The challenge is to provide the opportunity to achieve economic prosperity and social justice on terms that seem “fair” and to take into consideration concepts of “reciprocity.” By reciprocity we mean a type of mutuality where people understand the importance of responding in kind, rather than simply taking advantage. This may seem out of step with the modern world of “Darwinian Capitalism,” where advantage will always be taken and where, it is assumed, will always be losers. The problem we see with this perspective is that if massive social disruptions continue to increase, we could all be losers.

Midway through the first decade of the 21st Century, it would appear that things have not gone according to plan. Rather than ending history, history continues to be made. We at Four Worlds and United Indians believe that a “South Wind is Blowing” in this hemisphere, that the ancient prophecies of the Reunion of the Condor and Eagle are rapidly and irresistibly being fulfilled, and that Indigenous People will play an ever-greater role in determining the future of this hemisphere. In this period of turmoil and growing conflict another perspective is needed. We propose the Fourth Way is that needed perspective.

An Indigenous Perspective

The Indigenous peoples of Mother Earth, who still have a connection to their land, language, culture, history and spiritual traditions are the poorest and most socially and politically marginalized populations in every country in which they reside. They have the poorest health, the worst levels of infant and child mortality, they are the most exposed and

vulnerable to environmental pollutants, they have the lowest levels of education and the highest levels of perceived powerlessness, political oppression and frustration.

Indeed, many Indigenous peoples have been, and are still being, pushed into extremes of poverty and misery, or even to the brink of extinction in some regions, all in the name of “progress” or “development.” Many have been forced to leave their traditional lands, sometimes at gunpoint, after having been falsely accused of being “rebels” (or, more recently, “terrorists”) by those who intended to profit from the seizure of Indigenous land. Indigenous land holds much of the world’s remaining natural resources, including oil and gas as well as a host of other minerals, forest products, and, of course, water, which, as the foundation of all life, is increasingly being commodified.

Millions of Indigenous people have watched helplessly as their traditional means of livelihood were wiped out by unsustainable environmental practices used by large transnational fishing, timber, oil, mining corporations, by plantation style agricultural operations, and by large government-subsidized agribusiness corporations usurping agricultural markets in their countries. Hundreds of thousands of Indigenous small farmers can no longer earn a basic income because of the intentional destruction of local agricultural markets through predatory global trade practices dictated by the agribusiness industry. These farmers have joined the millions of illegal immigrants flooding into the United States. When viewed through the eyes of Indigenous people, these conditions are not exaggerations; they are the unembellished facts of life.

Indigenous Response

Over the years, there have been a variety of responses among Indigenous people to this cruel set of conditions, ranging from assimilation, passive resignation and resistance. At the same time, there has always been a powerful core of Indigenous elders and spiritual leaders who advocated holding on to the ancient spiritual vision of the oneness of the human family, and the teaching that the way out of this period of oppression and suffering Indigenous peoples have endured is not through violence, but rather through healing the trusts that were broken, and through building constructive partnerships with all nations and peoples. These elders and spiritual leaders have continued to believe in the ancient prophecies, including the Reunion of the Condor and the Eagle, the Time of the Eighth Council Fire, the Return of the White Buffalo, the Emergence of the Fourth World and the fulfillment of Black Elk’s Daybreak Star Prophecy

that views the Human Family as the Children of one Mother and one Father nourished and shaded by the same sacred Tree of Life. In the past, their wise voices and vision were often overcome by those who had been unjustly abused and who understandably advocated resistance and violence. We believe that the time has now come to witness the fulfillment of their age-old vision of The Fourth Way.

In the last several years the dynamic of increasing powerlessness and oppression has started to change with the growing political and social influence of Indigenous people in countries throughout the global south. This dynamic has been significantly accelerated with the election of an Indigenous president in Bolivia, Evo Morales, whose approval rates continue to rise. A pan-Indigenous movement in Ecuador increases in influence every day. Indigenous peoples also have hope for a strong political future in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guatemala and Mexico. In fact, as stated previously, in every country across the Americas some form of Indigenous movement is arising and joining with other social justice movements.

While these political movements are still relatively young, and lack comprehensive governing experience, it is nonetheless clear that as they gain power and influence a different idea of governance will emerge than the models so carefully cultivated by the established “democracies” in industrial north. These movements represent poor and marginalized people who have been exploited and abused for more than 500 years. It should be anticipated that such networks will join with other movements in their regions and from around Mother Earth to put forward very different ideas of societal relationships. Neo-Liberalism, with its emphasis on globalization, privatization and free market capitalism will be revisited and radically revised.

Indigenous people have traditions rooted in community, sharing, reciprocity and mutual responsibility somewhat akin to the political philosophies at the foundation of the Canadian confederation; namely that every person is a “trust of the whole,” and as such holds rights and privileges as well as responsibilities. For example, it is likely that many Indigenous movements will oppose private ownership of natural resources, but would support development of these resources if the community benefits. It is also possible that Indigenous people will support policies that share the wealth of the nation. In the past, great wealth has been removed from Indigenous lands, but Indigenous peoples have not benefited. There will almost certainly be growing conflict if this pattern continues.

As previously discussed, rather than focusing on current realities, so much of what the United States and its allies (including Canada) are doing now in the global south is counter-productive, rooted in cold-war thinking, or else is simply ineffectual. Following the election of President Evo Morales, President Bush waited for over two weeks to call and congratulate him. Why did this happen? Canada and the U.S. need to engage these movements and their leaders and work to help them to improve their nations rather than doing nothing or simply opposing their policies.

The war of words between the current U.S. Administration and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, to cite another example, is also proving counterproductive. Hugo Chavez was democratically elected as President of Venezuela, whether some political interests like it or not. We submit that American, Canadian and hemispheric interests are better served by working with President Chavez than by trading insults. If the world respects the principle of democracy, so must it respect the results of democracy. Clearly, Europe, Canada, and the United States face a similar dilemma in the face of the election of Hamas in 2006 to lead the government of Palestine and it should be anticipated that more of such outcomes are likely in other countries where democracy is advancing parallel to political Islam.

It is well documented that in past eras, the U.S. and its intelligence agencies covertly arranged a coup or worked with reactionary elements within countries to arrange a convenient assassination to eliminate leaders and governments that are “inconvenient.” In the pursuit of American interests, the U.S. has overthrown or undermined at least 40 Latin American governments in the 20th Century. A particularly egregious example was the violent overthrow of the Democratic Socialist Government of Guatemalan President Jacobo Guzman in 1954 resulting in a military dictatorship primarily representing the interests of the United Fruit Company i.e. to what was called a “Banana republic.” The result was a communist insurgency and a savage U.S. backed military campaign of repression, primarily against Indigenous people, which ultimately cost the lives of over 100,000 Maya Indians.

This sad history has been repeated, not only in Latin America, but also throughout much of the developing world, and grassroots peoples have significantly suffered as a result. We submit that U.S. policy is stumbling in the Middle East because those setting policy have been primarily driven by what we believe to be an “out of date militarism” and have not taken the time to understand the cultures and desires of these essentially tribal peoples. Will Canada and

the United States continue to make these same mistakes in their own hemisphere by substituting militarism for engagement and empowerment? It is certainly clear that in the present socio-political context, familiar “non-engagement, isolation or elimination policies” toward Presidents Chavez and Morales, for example, will have far, far greater negative consequences across the Americas than such policies have had in the past. Indeed, perhaps the U.S. has “lost” Latin America as the new BBC special series proposes and the questions should be “what will be the consequences,” or, “how much worse will it get?” What is important to understand is that although these “coups” and “interventions” were considered to be highly successful at the time, in hindsight they clearly appear to have been totally unnecessary and the long term results proved disastrous -- not just for the reputation of the U.S. abroad but for U.S. interests as well. This has proven to be especially true in Latin America and, as we will later discuss, Iran.

Policy makers need to understand that attempting to make policy without understanding culture is a dead end and that you cannot equate culture with values. Culture is what people share, not just what they believe. Indigenous people share BOTH culture AND a system of values often different from that of the developed world.

We observe that many armed conflicts around the world are rooted, at least in part, in tribal differences. Many of these tribal conflicts are fuelled and funded by competition between various powers for valuable resources such as petroleum, as well as by the production and sale of illegal drugs. Two timely examples of this relationship can be found in Afghanistan and Colombia. In both countries, the sale of drugs fund violence and armed conflict. In Colombia, access to petroleum is hotly contested. Afghanistan sits as a cross road of valuable pipeline routes and sits at the crossroads of Central Asia. Just as the tribal lands of Afghanistan are the primary source for heroin for Europe, so are the ultra-right and left-wing movements working with Narco traffickers in Colombia the primary source of cocaine and heroin for the North American market. Similarly, Indigenous peoples (controlled by drug lords and corrupt government officials) in Asia produce most of the remainder of the illegal drugs consumed in the world. Collectively, illegal drugs provide hundreds of billions of dollars towards increasing the strength of organized crime and the spread of terror and violence around the world. For example, although the Taliban had virtually eliminated opium production, the occupation of Afghanistan by U.S. and NATO forces has resulted in huge increases in drug production. This discordant fact is certainly troubling.

The majority of the world's current natural resource development -- including oil and gas production as well as agriculture and other related economic activities -- take place on or near traditional Indigenous lands. Future exploration and production will require further involvement of Indigenous peoples. Afghanistan, for instance, is of key importance in this regard (largely as a strategic pathway for needed pipelines) situated as it is at the crossroads of competition for resources in central Asia.

In the Americas, the oil from what were traditional Indigenous lands in Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela supplied to the U.S. is greater than that supplied by the Middle East. If these resources are added to known Canadian and Mexican resources, and should there be peace and harmony throughout the Americas between Indigenous peoples and the Governments, as well as the business communities and civil societies of the countries within which Indigenous people reside, the energy and agricultural needs of the Western Hemisphere could be largely supplied from within.

If this harmony is not created we could witness a weakening Latin American economic system increasingly destabilized by a long war on terrorism, along with a faltering North American economy, a flourishing and expanding drug trade, and the growing dysfunction of governance systems and related institutions. We could also witness the growth of violently opposing ultra-right and ultra-left insurgent groups along with increasing social unrest fueled by an ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor (both across the south, as well as within many North American cities and Indigenous communities) which could very seriously destabilize the Americas and with it our collective supply of energy, food, and other resources needed for our survival.

Consider the long insurgency in Colombia. Both FARC and ELN foot soldiers include peoples of Indigenous background who, for the most part, have lost their culture, language, land base and are engaged in armed conflict to regain some semblance of social and economic security. In its earliest days, FARC's peaceful attempts to bring about political and social change resulted in the assassination of their democratically elected leader. A subsequent loss of land and integrity led to an even greater vulnerability to Marxist political ideology focused on class-based struggle and revolution. These groups (with nothing to lose) are very dedicated in their cause and are clearly willing to die for their beliefs. Moreover, this armed struggle has

continued for decades as shown by the song expressing the legend of Marulanda, the fabled FARC leader: “They have been killing Marulanda, killing Marulanda, and he’s not dead yet.”²

Recently, the U.S. Justice Department indicted 50 members of the FARC leadership including Pedro Antonio Marin, known by his nom de guerre, Manuel Marulanda. Marulanda is a former chicken farmer who took up arms against the government in the 1950s and helped turn a peasant army into the richest, best equipped Marxist insurgency in Latin America, due apparently to drug trade resources.

It is important to note a 2006 World Bank report that stated the gap between rich and poor in Colombia, the strongest ally of the U.S. in Latin America, is exactly as it was in 1938. In fact, the concentrations of wealth and poverty rates in Colombia are even more extreme than its neighbors. Moreover, there are more than 3 million internally displaced people (refugees) resulting from the civil strife in Columbia (the most of any country in the Americas), the vast majority of whom are Indigenous. All of this is very troubling in light of the fact that Colombia receives more financial and military support from the U.S. than any other country in Latin America. Obviously, a new approach is required. The continued denial of the legitimate aspirations of Indigenous peoples and the marginalized poor will continue to feed increasingly violent conflict.

The rank and file of the now deposed, but still very powerful and active Taliban are also tribal peoples who evolved initially to pacify Afghanistan in the chaos and warlordism that occurred in the aftermath of the Russian pullout. The Taliban are fundamentalist Muslims who truly believe that their very spiritual existence is being unjustly and violently attacked by Western materialism. Taliban members are steeped in an extremist ideology by religious schools that promote narrow, dogmatic and violent ideology. They come from a long lineage of Afghan and Arabic warriors, most of whose history has been filled with constant conflict, primarily against Western colonialism. They are willing to die for their beliefs, as they have demonstrated repeatedly. Although the Taliban are not now in control of Afghanistan, the movement is still active and Afghanistan is far from pacified. In fact, out of the heavily militarized cities, chaos rules and attacks continue. How can the area be pacified? Not by military occupation alone. Although the tribal peoples of the Middle East and Central Asia may not be ready to join the Indigenous peoples of the Americas in actualizing The Fourth

² (FARC fighting song.)

Way, we feel our analysis is still important in understanding the feelings and motivation of these tribal peoples.

The real issue is this: how can such tribal peoples be drawn away from extremist ideologies and toward a more constructive and harmonious development path? It will be necessary for anyone who wants to support peacemaking to understand the history, culture, values and aspirations of these tribal Afghan peoples. This area has been the playground of great power competition since “the great game” era of British and Russian conflict. Colonial impulses die hard -- but die they must if we are to have some hope of resolving the conflicts of this new century. What should be very sobering is the fact that there are millions of angry and dispossessed people across the globe, growing daily in numbers, all vulnerable to radical ideology, who can see no hope, no future, and who feel they have nothing left to lose.

A similar examination is needed to avoid increasing instability, violence and an expanding drug trade in the Western hemisphere, where there are also millions of angry, marginalized people who themselves are becoming increasingly addicted to drugs and are beginning to believe that they have nothing left to lose. This examination must also include proposals for major changes in how we address illegal drug consumption in Canada and the United States.

We have emphasized that a key part of diffusing violence and advancing economic prosperity is developing an understanding of what it is like to see the world (past, present and future) through the eyes of those who believe they have nothing left to lose. Now a new dynamic has been added as the prospect of political power comes to the fore with the recent successes in elections, and with it the hope of changing unresponsive governments. The old passive resignation is being replaced by social and political activism, but chronic poverty and lack of power endures. This is a potent recipe for one of two outcomes: conflict, or renewal and advancement. Those who hope for peaceful and harmonious outcomes should support renewal and advancement.

Indigenous Analysis

In our conversations with Indigenous leaders across the Americas they provide the following analysis:

- A. Our people are facing grinding poverty and have endured the ongoing suppression of self-development efforts by our own governments (i.e. the governments of the nation states in which they reside, including many Native communities within Canada and the U.S.). Now,

in some countries, there is hope for change. What will the reaction of the world community be? Will self-development and new leadership be supported or crushed by violence, assassination or lack of support?

B. Many Indigenous people see only four options:

1. **Assimilation** - to give up our Indigenous identity, our history, our culture, our spiritual beliefs and our way of life, and become part of the blended homogenous mass. Some of our people have tried to do this and, and most of them lost their land and remain marginalized, poor and increasingly desperate.
2. **Resignation** – to accept powerlessness, poverty, victimization, sickness and despair as our destiny; in other words, to give up.
3. **Resistance** – to enter into organized struggles to defend our lands, our families and our lives, and to win concessions from our governments. Resistance can range from non-violent protests to armed struggle and can include participation in the black market for drugs and weapons.
4. **Empowerment and Constructive Development** – to create organized Indigenous and related social movements focused on promoting the healing, well-being and prosperity of the people and on electing and supporting leaders who are truly responsive to the majority of the people; leaders who will not only improve education, health care, infrastructure and economic development, but will also work to create social and political “spaces” within the countries where Indigenous people reside, for true participation in an inclusive and equitable project of rebuilding nations.

This approach is not merely political in nature. It also implies a systematic reclamation and recovery of Indigenous cultural foundations, identity and language, and the re-anchoring of social, economic and political change in the spiritual and cultural values and traditional knowledge at the heart of Indigenous cultures. This approach in no way implies a retreat into the historical past, but rather it is an active engagement of the challenge of shaping the future of nations within the framework of life-preserving, life-enhancing, and sustainable values and patterns of action in harmony with all members of the human family.

- C. Indigenous leaders noted that those Indigenous groups that have taken up arms get a great deal of attention. It still remains to be seen whether or not those who participate politically and win elections will achieve anything. If not, armed struggle will be all that is left.

We know that some areas of Latin America have been destabilized by inappropriate interventions leading to armed conflict and increasing communal violence, much of it fueled by exclusion from the political and economic system and by competition for resources and the drug trade. A lack of economic alternatives now allow drug cartels to operate with relatively unencumbered freedom along the spine of the Americas though Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean and into the heartland of North America. A multi-year “war on drugs,” the expenditure of billions of dollars, the application of hazardous defoliants, increased militarization, and dramatic losses of civil liberties has had little effect on either the price or availability of illegal drugs. This war has, however, curtailed civil rights, increased drug addiction, poverty, ill-health and marginalization and has driven more people into the arms of extremists and criminal movements across the Americas. Is this simply another failed policy, or were the outcomes we now see intentional? Certainly when the “War on Drugs” policy was being introduced across Latin America, Indigenous people tried to warn of these outcomes, and their communities have suffered greatly from what has occurred.

Where are the billions of dollars going that North Americans pay the drug cartels for their addictive habits? Certainly a substantial amount of these funds are going towards corrupting, destabilizing and gaining power and control over the world that surrounds their illicit activities. In whose interests is this power being purchased? Is it on behalf of criminal elements only, or other covert partners?

Just as the active participation of grassroots Indigenous peoples of the Middle East is critical to any long-term strategy to end extreme poverty and to defuse terror and violence in that region of the world, so is the active participation of the millions of Indigenous peoples of the Americas absolutely critical to any long range effort to create a secure, stable, and prosperous Western Hemisphere. This active participation not only has direct implications for Indigenous communities, but also for the rest of the Hemisphere’s marginalized poor, many of whom have Indigenous roots and are increasingly identifying with their Indigenous backgrounds. In this respect, it is also important to include the Indigenous peoples in the U.S. and Canada, as a large

majority of whom have also been excluded and marginalized. These relatives have significant cultural, spiritual, economic and political contributions to make in developing, implementing and developing the Fourth Way strategy across the Americas.

Towards Implementing the Fourth Way Strategy

We spoke earlier of four options Indigenous people see for themselves in all of this: Assimilation, Resignation, Resistance or Constructive Development. Empowerment and Constructive Development is the “Fourth Way” that would lead to sustainable peace, social justice and shared economic prosperity if it is vigorously and whole-heartedly pursued. As shared earlier, this is a pathway that has always been known and advocated by Indigenous spiritual leaders. It is the way of healing, peace and partnership building.

What is relatively new is that many leaders of Indigenous movements across the Americas are now more open than ever to “The Fourth Way” because they are beginning to see that the other three pathways, (and especially the pathway of violence and conflict), are creating even deeper misery and suffering for their people. Many Indigenous people have tried the other three pathways and understand that another path is necessary. The challenge is that “The Fourth Way” is not a path Indigenous people can walk solely on their own. Ultimately, they will need the collaboration, support and true partnership of their governments, the business community, NGOs and international funding agencies.

In our work across the Americas over the years, we have had the opportunity to sit in community level meetings with thousands of Indigenous people and their leadership from many different tribes and nations. What we have seen and heard in these meetings is the same consistent message:

1. The vast majority of Indigenous peoples want what most people everywhere on Mother Earth want: peace, freedom from poverty and disease, an end to oppression, a respect for their cultures, languages, and Mother Earth, a reasonable level of sustainable prosperity and well-being for their families and communities, access to education (including higher education), opportunities to sustainably and harmoniously participate in the global economy, and a meaningful voice in shaping the policies, programs and conditions that impact their lives.

2. Governments, and the people who have held the reins of political and economic power in their countries often present a stone wall of ignorance, prejudice and greed, with no significant will to understand the appalling realities and conditions of Indigenous peoples, and no real awareness that their own wealth production activities (in oil, gas, agriculture, forestry, mining, etc.) are, at best, cutting Indigenous people out of any opportunity for economic advancement, and, at worst, setting into motion environmental, economic, political and social forces that are directly destroying the lives of Indigenous communities. With new leadership coming to power across the hemisphere, it is important that political change be supported and channeled in a positive direction.
3. As viewed through the eyes of many Indigenous people, the forces of globalization centered in the institutions and programs of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and large transnational corporations, and manifested as well in many so-called aid and development programs that also seem to be driven by the policies of the wealthy and powerful, and these policies (it is perceived) are creating and perpetuating the intolerable conditions with which Indigenous people are now living. This perception continues despite the supposed efforts of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank to increase their focus on the role of spirituality and culture in development.
4. Indigenous people are increasingly becoming organized and politicized in their efforts to pressure governments and international institutions for change. Their organizations and movements are powerful enough to directly challenge and destroy the legitimacy and power of some governments. Indigenous people have been successful recently in electing leaders who have pledged their support for changing this pattern. Will these new government leaders be successful? Now, as governments elected with Indigenous participation and leadership takes power, it is critical that they succeed, and that the movement of harmonious constructive development through spiritual empowerment spread across the Americas. Indigenous people across the Americas are asking: what will be the response of the developed world to these new political movements? Will they be supported or undermined and opposed? Will we see constructive engagement and development or a new cycle of militarization, assassinations and military coups?

An Indigenous Cultural and Spiritual Awakening and Growing Unity

Despite the challenges, there is a spiritual awakening occurring throughout the Indigenous world. This awakening is coming from within Indigenous peoples in response to years of suffering and potential destruction, as well as from their cultural and spiritual treasures of Sacred prophecies, gifts, teachings, songs, ceremonies and the spiritual guidance of wise teachers and elders both past and present. Throughout the Indigenous world, there are a mosaic of prophecies that share, in essence, that after a long wintertime of suffering, a new spiritual springtime would emerge for Indigenous tribes and peoples which will lead to a spiritual awakening among other members of the human family throughout the Americas and around the world.

With this awakening, a powerful new spirit and energy is being released within the Indigenous world. This empowering spirit has its roots in the Indigenous peoples' strong belief in the promises of ultimate justice and renewal found within Indigenous prophecies. However, this growing, animating, dynamic and empowering spirit can be directed towards rapidly and systematically building a new world civilization, beginning in the Americas or it can be co-opted and translated into further insurgencies, violence, and terror. The choice is ours. The ancient prophecies are steadily moving toward fulfillment. This development should be welcomed and supported, as the prophecies also speak of how this fulfillment will benefit the entire human family by helping to usher in an era of global peace prosperity and well being.

So what is the “Fourth Way”?

The Fourth Way consists of a multi-pronged strategy for empowering Indigenous peoples to move toward sustainable peace, prosperity and well-being, taking into account the history, culture and values of Indigenous communities. The Fourth Way entails the following lines of action:

- I. ***Constructive diplomatic work***, both from the top down and from the bottom up, to empower Indigenous people and to assist governments and national as well as international institutions to make critical policy and program shifts (out of enlightened self-interest) that will help to create an enabling environment for viable partnerships to be built between Indigenous peoples across the hemisphere and between Indigenous people and the governments of the countries in which they reside. This diplomatic work would, as well,

assist Indigenous leaders to move past feelings of mistrust and suspicion, and into a process of consultation leading to constructive partnerships.

What is needed are new strategic initiatives that will allow Indigenous people to contribute to and receive a just share of the wealth of the nation states in which they reside, but which also does not require those now in positions of wealth and power to feel that they will lose everything. The guiding principle of these strategic initiatives should be harmonizing the extremes of wealth and poverty. We see each government's diplomatic corps playing a critical role in this aspect of the work, in partnership with specialists in Indigenous peoples' development.

II. *Partnership Building*

Extensive and sustained partnership building work is needed.

- a. Inter-Indigenous partnerships. These will entail partnerships between Indigenous people and nations across the America's for mutual assistance in development, economic cooperation and educational activities. These partnerships and related activities should include exchange programs in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish through the creation of language institutes (especially for young people); as well as scholarships and internships focused on building Indigenous capacity and developing Indigenous leadership necessary to implement the Fourth Way;
- b. Indigenous to government. Constructive partnerships must also be developed between Indigenous people and the government of the countries in which they reside, aimed at giving Indigenous people a real voice in shaping the policies and programs that impact them. These partnerships must ultimately result in significant improvements in the social and economic life of the Indigenous communities;
- c. Indigenous institutions and international development agencies. Collaborative working partnerships are also required between appropriate Indigenous institutions and selected NGOs, international development and funding agencies, focused on various aspects of development assistance and capacity building;
- d. Expanded partnerships between newly elected Indigenous leadership along with the governments they now control, and the governments of Canada and the U.S. must be forged that include direct support and assistance in advancing development objectives

and diffusing conflict and violence, and stopping militarization, assassinations and military coups.

- e. North-south Indigenous peoples partnerships. Finally, collaborative working partnerships need to be developed between Indigenous people in the north (Canada and the United States) and their counterparts in the south, to allow for the sharing of knowledge, capacity and resources for mutual aid, trade and development. Indeed this connection existed for centuries, before it was broken apart by European colonization and the subsequent decimation of Indigenous nations across the Americas. For example, an ancient prophecy predicted the “Reunion of the people of the Condor (i.e., Indigenous people of the south), and the people of the Eagle, (i.e., the Indigenous people of the north),” and predicted that when this Reunion was fully realized, a great era of peace, well-being and prosperity would follow. So strong is the belief in this prophecy among Indigenous people, that the Otomi people in the state of Mexico have built a vast ceremonial amphitheatre dedicated to the “Reunion of the Condor and the Eagle.” The focal point of this amazing construction (which rivals the ancient Mayan, Aztec and Zapoteca pyramids in its size, grace and beauty, and which was built largely by the volunteer labor of thousands of poor Indigenous people out of love and faith in the prophecy) is a gigantic stone carving of a Condor and an Eagle joined in loving embrace. It was at this location that the first Reunion of the Condor and Eagle, International Indigenous Trade and Social Development Agreement and Unity Pact was signed on May 5, 1999, between Indigenous Leaders of more than 100,000 Indigenous peoples from Mexico and representatives of First Nations from Canada and the U.S.



Thaayrohyadi Serafin Bermudez de la Cruz, General Co-ordinator of the Otomi National Council, and Phil Lane Jr., sign the Reunion of the Condor and Eagle: International Indigenous Trade and Social Development Agreement and Unity Pact, on May 5, 1999.

Following the first Reunion of the Condor and Eagle Agreement and Unity Pact in Mexico, further Sacred Agreements and Unity Pacts based in the Sixteen Principles for Building a Sustainable and Harmonious World were signed at the Indigenous Summit of the Americas in Ottawa, Ontario in March, 2001, and at the Reunion of the Condor, Indigenous Action Summit, in the Commonwealth of Dominica in March, 2003. These Sacred Unity Pacts now unite Indigenous representatives and their allies from Greenland, Canada, the United States, Mexico, Guyana, Guatemala, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and the Commonwealth of Dominica, continues with populations of more than 57 million Indigenous peoples who still speak their own Indigenous languages. As well, in April, 2002, a fourth Sacred Agreement and Unity Pact was signed in Bern, Switzerland, with Canadian and European supporters and NGOs.

III. ***The creation of effective participatory governance institutions and mechanisms*** through which Indigenous people can negotiate constructively with governments and the business community to address their ongoing needs and concerns, and through which they can manage and direct their own development programs and processes.

IV. ***Targeted and sustained development assistance to support comprehensive social and economic development programs in the heart of Indigenous nations*** that focus on such critical issues as education, social and economic development, leadership, governance and institution building, and civil society. The focus should also be on strengthening, food production and food security, business and enterprise development, sustainable environment and resource management, primary health care, cultural revitalization, and building and preserving a culturally appropriate social safety net. This targeted aid must be sustained for at least a decade, as capacity is built and a self-sustaining process of development is fostered.

In essence, the Fourth Way (a pathway that moves beyond assimilation, resignation and resistance to actual empowerment) works towards Indigenous nation building and development and occurs within a context of cooperation and partnership with government, business, civil society in general as well as within the legal framework of each nation state within which Indigenous peoples reside.

Is This Realistic?

Twenty years ago, such a proposal might have seemed fanciful outside the context of Indigenous communities, but events in New York, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Palestine, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, and Colombia have overtaken us, and made it crystal clear that the disempowered and impoverished masses can no longer be viewed as a “neutral” environmental factor to be largely ignored in the process of doing business and running countries.

At this stage in history, no country in the Americas can afford to continue doing "business as usual." The risks are simply too great. While it is true that to make the shifts that will be required in a "fourth way" approach will not be without costs, the costs of failing to invest in Indigenous peoples' development and those that have become the “marginalized poor” will be very great indeed, and holds the potential to destabilize entire societies.

Diffusing Violence and Terror and the Fourth Way

The plight of Indigenous people in the Americas is chillingly similar to the realities and conditions of many tribes and nations of people in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific. *Again, it is critical that we acquire the desire to understand* what the world looks like when viewed through the eyes of people who have known little else but debilitating insecurity and poverty, and who feel powerless to change their situation for themselves or their children.

When viewed through such eyes by the Islamic tribes of the Middle East, the actions of the extreme right in the State of Israel (backed by the United States of America) can be interpreted as systematically and violently preventing Palestinians from achieving reasonable levels of social and economic well-being and self-determination through occupation and illegal confiscation of occupied land. This not only creates conditions leading to terrorism, but also contributes to restive populations electing groups such as Hamas in hopes of improving their day-to-day lives. Those who are unhappy with the overwhelming electoral victory of Hamas in the occupied Palestinian territories must face serious questions as to why this has occurred. At the same time, in order to move towards the Fourth Way (the path that many Palestinians and Israelis would like to walk) it must also be understood that the formation of the State of Israel was, in part, a response to thousands of years of intergenerational fear, pain, violence, hurt, terror and insecurity experienced by tribes of Israel culminating in the Shoah of the 20th

Century. Will decision-makers have the capacity to see and absorb the simple message that extremism and injustice begets more extremism and injustice? As one wise Indigenous elder summarized this intergenerational process of unresolved trauma, “The most sacred ceremony of all ceremonies is the birth of a child. Every human is born a sacred, holy and spiritual being that should always be treated with the utmost love and respect. Only hurt people hurt people, only abused people abuse people, only violated people violate people, only terrorized people terrorize people and only people who have been hated and despised, hate and despise other people.”

When viewed through such eyes, the previous sanctions against Iraq and now the war and occupation of Iraq have served only to destroy the infrastructure of the country and to increase the killing and impoverishment of the Iraqi peoples without any visibly constructive results. Another similar example of U.S. intervention in the Middle East gone awry is the U.S. overthrow of the democratically elected Prime Minister of Iran, Mohammed Mossadegh in a coup in 1953. Mossadegh was a nationalist who advocated nationalization of oil resources. He had been accused, falsely, of being pro-communist and the coup restored the autocratic rule of the Shah of Iran. Over the next decades, the Shah effectively destroyed or neutralized many of his more moderate opposition; with the result that opposition to the Shah was assumed by religious fundamentalists ending in the disastrous revolution of 1979. The prevailing mistrust of the U.S. on the part of Iranians was amplified by the United States’ covert support for Iraq’s unprovoked invasion of Iran in the 1980s that haunts U.S./Iranian relations today. Iran and her people are still recovering from the traumatic scars of the Iran-Iraq War that claimed millions of casualties. In this context of deep insecurity and mistrust, it is perhaps easier to understand Iran’s quest for nuclear technology, especially when the newly elected Head of State is a veteran of that war. Rather than attempt to assuage their insecurity and rebuild trust by providing Iran with guarantees for the security of its people, we now hear the drums of war calling for an air attack on Iran in an effort to destroy this nuclear technology, perhaps employing the use of tactical nuclear weapons. So the cycle of error compounds itself and tragedy appears to be the inexorable outcome. Will the West destroy the infrastructure of yet another Middle Eastern country? Will we witness the spread of war and the complete destabilization of this vital region? How will the Muslim populations of the Middle East respond to such an attack?

When viewed through such eyes, oil operations in many countries in Africa such as Sudan and Nigeria and much of the developing world are seen to enrich governments that a majority of people do not want, and that serve no one's interests but those of corrupt authorities. At the same time, billions of dollars of wealth of these countries flow out, never to be seen again while majorities of the people remain poor. This pattern has been repeated in region after region around the world.

It's no small wonder that a growing majority of people in Venezuela support President Hugo Chavez. Through the eyes of the poorest, he is for the first time ever using the oil wealth of Venezuela to significantly improve the lives of its poorest people. The seeming lack of support on the part of the United States for his efforts is not lost on the poor of the Latin America, the Caribbean and beyond, especially when the U.S. is either silent or complicit in the face of wholesale exportation of oil wealth in other parts of the world, where Western oil companies benefit, as the tension and differences between wealth and poverty grow.

From one perspective, attacking innocent civilians is always terrorism and is never justified. But when viewed through the eyes of many of the world's people, their own innocent civilians are being made to suffer and die on a daily basis because of the "rules of the game" established by the powers that be. Without an alternative means to fight back, people without F-16s, bulldozers, or unmanned drones believing they have only their bodies to use as weapons to fight oppression, are labeled as "terrorists" when they resist. Many of the powerless and oppressed feel that these rules are made and enforced to serve the interests of the already wealthy and powerful nations of the world. Osama bin Laden is seen as a hero to many middle class, educated young people across the Muslim world because he "fought back" and dared to strike a blow against the "Empire" that makes and enforces rules that, they believe, create the terrible conditions so many people are forced to live within. "They call it terrorism. We call it Jihad," stated one Pakistani university student. "When it serves their interests, they routinely take actions that result in the deaths of thousands. They don't call this terrorism. For them it's business as usual." These verdicts seem harsh, but we must heed the underlying call for justice if we expect to impact the future in a positive way. We must support those people on the ground that are attempting to walk the path of the Fourth Way in generating effective non-violent means of responding to the daily injustices they face.

The Iraqi war has increased not decreased terrorism. U.S. statements and broadcasts related to Iran persuaded many moderates in that country not to vote in the 2005 election, which led to the election of a hard-line Islamic government. Surely, this is not what the U.S. and their allies intended to accomplish. Expanding the war to Iran will surely increase terrorism even more. Is this the intended result? Do we really want to see the world's resources consumed by war and militarism?

The immediate and short-term solution may be to search out and destroy terrorist cells and networks, and the people who support them. But in the long term, the root causes of political violence and terror are connected to the social and economic conditions of the world's peoples, and the lack of justice and reciprocity these populations perceive. Ask yourself, will we achieve peace through force or through justice?

The Fourth Way Strategy and analysis respects human dignity, calls for the empowerment of people and comprises a framework for action that can be implemented anywhere in the world where sustainable development and nation building constitute critical lines of action in diffusing terror, violence and poverty, and creating conditions that lead to constructive development, spiritual empowerment, social justice and economic prosperity.

A Primary Role for Canada?

Although Canada's international influence and prestige, especially in the Americas, has markedly diminished over the past few years (especially since the overthrow of democratically elected Aristide in Haiti), Canada was in the past acknowledged as a world leader in sustainable peacemaking and development. While Canada does not have the military and economic power of the United States, it does have a unique and potent combination of strengths to offer related to diffusing terror and violence, and empowering Indigenous people. Canada's potential strengths include constructive diplomacy and peacemaking, sustainable development, a multicultural civil society and most especially the accumulated wisdom, knowledge, experience and capacity of its own Indigenous peoples. Canada also has many allies worldwide that would work together on initiatives to support the sustainable development of Indigenous peoples.

It is also well known and admired around the world that Indigenous peoples in Canada are recognized in that country's constitution, and have achieved both legally and politically (in Nunavut and Nishga'a') what virtually no other Indigenous minority people in the world have achieved without bloodshed, i.e. the establishment of sovereign Indigenous territories within the

legal framework of the nation state in which they reside. There are other numerous examples of positive political, social and economic development initiatives that Aboriginal communities and the Government of Canada have to share with the world.

A primary line of action in reducing the extremes of powerlessness and poverty, and in diffusing violence must be to facilitate substantial social and economic transformation in the lives of people, families, tribes and First Nations who are now feeling that there is no hope and no way out of their dilemma. This will need to unfold with great respect and understanding of the various political, cultural and religious perspectives that need to be harmonized into unitary, rather than adversarial consciousness.

We believe that Canada, in partnership with Indigenous peoples, has the capacity to play a truly significant leadership role in this area. One of the most important contributions Canada could make at this critical juncture is to publicly assert that leadership on the world stage by making it clear that Canada views promoting sustainable development (combined with other strategies) targeted to Indigenous people across the hemisphere, to be a vital and important line of action in the struggle to end violence and poverty in the Americas through a strategy of empowerment and development.

In order to regain the credibility worldwide required to play this vital role, Canada would need to much more systematically and effectively address the third-world conditions that exist in Indigenous communities within its own borders. Of particular concern in this regard is the need to adequately address, in a just and timely manner, the profound needs of the survivors of residential schools (and the needs of their children and grandchildren) for healing both from the trauma and abuse experienced in the schools and from the subsequent decline of whole communities into generations of dysfunctional chaos and enormous personal suffering. As well, if Canada is to regain its moral authority across the Americas and around the world, it must resolve, in consultation with Indigenous peoples, other existing third-world conditions including the lack of adequate housing, clean water, and a just sharing of Canada's economic prosperity. The knowledge of how to do this already exists.³ All that is required is political will and sustained effort.

³ Much of the analysis of what is required was summarized in the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP: Volumes 1, 2 and 3) 1996. Government of Canada. It has also been strategically described and in various publications of Four Worlds International (see for example "Mapping the Healing

Indigenous Struggles in the United States

After already losing a large majority of the Indigenous population through infectious diseases, like small pox that came with early European contact (sometimes intentionally), it is a historical reality that the U.S. utilized every military means possible to eliminate Indigenous resistance to their policy of “Manifest Destiny.” This included, on many occasions, unleashing extreme terror and violence on Indigenous communities -- including the imprisonment, hanging, and assassination of Indigenous leaders. In fact, at the beginning of the last century it was truly believed by many that Native Americans would eventually vanish into the much greater and expanding populations that increasingly surrounded them. Despite this profound intergenerational trauma, as well as dwindling at one time to just .5% of the U.S population, Indigenous peoples have not only survived, but in some regions of the U.S., (despite the enduring patterns of divide and conquer tactics), U.S. First Nations are becoming powerful cultural, political and economic forces.

One of the many hard won lessons learned by U.S. First Nations in their struggle with the U.S. government was the realization that true self-determination includes developing relationships with surrounding communities and governments that are not co-dependant. For example, the late Vine Deloria Jr. was a key spiritual and political force in building Native American political organizations that are not dependant on external government funding. In contrast to the Assembly of First Nations in Canada, the National Congress of American Indians, guided by Deloria’s visionary leadership in the 1960s, developed national and regional political organizations funded by First Nations themselves. Deloria deeply understood and communicated clearly throughout his life on issues affecting tribal sovereignty that it is very difficult to negotiate with those forces that are giving you the money to negotiate.

Where is the Current U.S. Administration and its Allies Leading the World?

We have previously discussed a portion of the history of U.S. led interventions in Latin America and around the world and have noted that while the interventions themselves were successful, the consequences for U.S. interests and the affected populations have been disastrous. We point out this uncomfortable fact not to attack the U.S. or to “blame America first” but to call for new thinking and a new approach. Many in the “realist” camp or those who

Journey” and “Community Healing and Aboriginal Social Security Reform” available at www.fourworlds.ca (go to Publications, and click on Free Downloads).

believe in “American Exceptionism” would argue (and we would agree) that many global powers across history have acted much worse and that in the exercise of power it is frequently necessary to “break a few eggs.” While this observation is arguably correct, we note the imperative to “produce something edible for all of these shattered shells lying around.” The problem with many of these interventions is not only that they were utterly immoral and ruthless, but that they were unnecessary and ultimately counterproductive creating many more problems than were thought to be solved by the intervention. We pointed out especially the coups in Iran in 1953 and in Guatemala in 1954 as being particularly counterproductive and disastrous in the modern era; the first directly leading to the current crisis over the Iranian nuclear program, and the second leading to the deaths of over 100,000 Indigenous peoples and to hostility across Latin America.

It is important to inject this historical perspective into the discussion so that the American public may be less inclined to wipe such disastrous episodes from its collective memory, thus permitting the American Economic Establishment to make the same mistakes over and over again, first in the Cold War and now in the “war on terror,” while covering its actions with the same rhetoric of “spreading freedom” and combating “evil.” If the general public cannot recall why these populations (such as in Iran and Latin America) are angry and distrustful, how can the Iranian hostage crisis, the current Iranian quest for nuclear power, or the conditions in the global south be put in perspective? If U.S. citizens cannot come to see these interventions and invasions for the disasters that they are, the U.S. public may not be able to resist “fear based” propaganda campaigns and we may soon witness the bombing of Iran and with it the potential end of the world as we know it. Should the current U.S. Administration and its supporters continue on their current path, we could see an increase in global conflict on a scale not seen in over 60 years, perhaps involving nuclear weapons and including asymmetric warfare fought in cities, highways and subways around the world. Modern society depends on peace and security to prosper. The growing conflict in the Middle East, the full and deepening involvement in that conflict by the current U.S. Administration, and growing instability in the Global South are threats to peace and economic prosperity everywhere. The Fourth Way calls for the redirection from military and diplomatic aggression to other constructive solutions for the security and prosperity, not only the U.S. and their supporters, but for the entire Human Family. We believe

this redirection of energy and resources should include a primary focus on rebuilding the well-being and prosperity of the Americas in respectful consultation with all concerned.

A Global Role for Canadian and U.S Indigenous Peoples

On the eve of the coalition air attacks on Afghanistan, Osama bin Laden called on the tribes of Afghanistan, Palestine, Uzbekistan, Iran and elsewhere to unite against the "American Aggressor" in a "holy war." It now appears that significant numbers of the youth of these countries responded. Note that he called on "the tribes." Beneath the paper-thin veneer of modern nation states, almost all of the Middle East, Asia Minor and parts of Africa are comprised of tribal peoples, loosely united by their adherence to Islam. Islamic adherence is by no means monolithic. There are many shades and stripes. Indeed, from a tribal point of view, Islamic influence represents positive opportunities for peacemaking and sustainable development that far outweigh the clear and present danger of fanatical extremism, primarily because the starting point for understanding reality is a spiritual perspective and because (before they were hijacked by fundamentalist extremists) the core teachings of Islam contributed enormously to nation building and the foundations of both eastern and Western civilizations.

Beyond what has been briefly highlighted, the ancient tribal wisdom, protocols, ceremonial processes and spiritual and cultural traditions of the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the United States constitute a tremendously powerful set of capacities. These capacities can be applied to the work of penetrating to the center of the tribes and nations in the world's most troubled areas, in making heart to heart connections with the spiritual leaders at the heart of those tribes and nations. We can be instrumental in creating constructive, consultative processes focused on supporting their tribal relatives to develop a path of sustainable and harmonious social and economic development that is appropriate, and that fits within their cultural and spiritual belief systems. This critical dimension of the Fourth Way is something that very few people on Mother Earth can carry out as effectively as the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the U.S.

Conclusion

Ending terror and or violence cannot be accomplished by military means alone. We must also assist in empowering people to achieve a socially just and reasonable measure of well-being and prosperity in their lives. Recent experience in Iraq seems to show that a heavy-handed military "solution" may make situations much more difficult to resolve. Indeed much of

what is needed to eliminate the scourge of terror and violence from the face of the Earth is related to empowering people to become engaged in constructive processes of change, and in bringing processes of harmonious development and social and economic justice to the dispossessed and the poorest in every region of Mother Earth.

The Fourth Way is not merely a strategic option, or an alternative path for Indigenous peoples of the Americas (as well as people like them elsewhere in the world) to take instead of assimilation (i.e. giving up their Indigenous identity and becoming part of the marginalized poor), resignation (i.e. accepting that it is their fate to be poor and miserable) or resistance (i.e. using struggle and violence to force change). It is the only option that will lead to sustainable peace and prosperity, and it is therefore an essential component in the struggle to end violence and poverty.

In summary, the Fourth Way strategy consists of the following:

1. *Diplomatic work* with national governments and with Indigenous people to enable all the stakeholders to develop the attitudinal pre-requisites and the will to carry out constructive partnerships.
2. *Constructive partnership building* between Indigenous peoples, their governments, the business community, development agencies and other relevant partners with a focus on reducing poverty and powerlessness and on promoting sustainable social and economic development.
3. *The creating of effective participatory governance institutions and mechanism and spaces* through which Indigenous people can acquire a meaningful voice and influence in the process of governing the countries in which they reside, in guiding and shaping the development of their own institutions and decision-making processes, and in directing their own processes of social and economic development.
4. *Targeted and sustained development assistance* to support comprehensive social and economic development partnerships and processes in the heart of Indigenous nations.

This strategy can be selectively employed in other areas of the world where the pressure of prolonged social and economic injustice and poverty have greatly increased the susceptibility of those populations to desperate and extreme measures, including terror and violence.

At this uncertain crossroads in human history, Indigenous peoples and their allies have a unique and powerful role to play as a champion of peacemaking and sustainable development,

which are critical lines of action in diffusing violence and poverty across the Americas and around the world.

We know that the Governments of Canada and the U.S., as well as other governments, face difficult and expensive decisions, and that national security must have a very high priority. We submit that **the Fourth Way is a strategic security initiative.** From an Indigenous perspective, the Fourth Way offers a strategic option for Indigenous peoples to provide the spiritual leadership to support the transformation of frustration, violence, hopelessness and poverty into sustainable and harmonious processes of constructive development, initially in the Americas and then around the world.

An Indigenous -to-Indigenous Call For Action

Whether or not all the nation states, multinational corporations or international development agencies that surround us are willing or able to participate with us at this time in developing The Fourth Way, our Indigenous peoples and allies need to immediately move forward in rebuilding and reunifying the Americas.

1. We have the ancient prophecies and a clear vision of an emerging future of social justice and collective prosperity for the Americas that we will, as promised, co-create with all members of the Human Family. This new era will occur as sure as the sun rises every morning.
2. We have a spiritual foundation of guiding principles and values that enabled us to survive a great spiritual winter that was filled, at times, with the utmost of human cruelty, violence, injustice, abuse, and physical and cultural genocide. In spite of this, throughout the Americas more and more of our Indigenous relatives are reawakening to their spiritual identity and are healing their sacred relationships with all members of the Human Family. In fact, a large majority of all the inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere have some degree of Indigenous ancestry.
3. Together, with our allies, we have the developing cultural, spiritual, scientific, technological, industrial, social, economic and agricultural capacities needed to co-create and rebuild our tribes and nations stronger than ever before.
4. Our Indigenous peoples, with the support of our allies, have the collective material resources to bring our greatest dreams and visions to reality. Collectively our

growing social capital, our land base, our natural resources including water, petroleum, natural gas, timber, rare minerals and gems, fishing and hunting rights and those rights and resources we have still to justly acquire, will soon enable us to become a major economic and spiritual force not only in the Americas, but around the world. For example, the Indigenous peoples of the Eagle (Canada and the U.S.), along with our allies, have the collective resources to directly support our Indigenous relatives of the Condor (Latin America) in developing their natural resources and social capital in a manner that supports our collective prophecies and vision of a rapidly emerging future with social justice and economic prosperity for all members of the Human Family. At the same time, as it was with the original Union of the Condor and Eagle, the Indigenous peoples of the South have many sacred gifts to share with their Indigenous relatives of the North.

The primary challenge that stands before us as Indigenous peoples in rebuilding the Americas is disunity. Therefore, the primary purpose of Stage 1 of The Fourth Way is laying the spiritual foundation for unity. Once this foundation is manifested, everything else will naturally unfold as foretold by the Ancient Ones.

FOUR WORLD'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE AND HARMONIOUS WORLD



These 16 principles for building a sustainable and harmonious world community emerged from a 36 year process of reflection, consultation and action within Indigenous communities across the Americas. They are rooted in the concerns of hundreds of aboriginal elders and leaders and thinkers, as well as in the best thinking of many non-aboriginal scholars, researchers and human and community development practitioners.

These guiding principles constitute the foundation for the process of healing and developing ourselves (mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually), your human relationships (personal; social, political, economic, and cultural) and our relationship with Mother Earth. They describe the way we must work and what we must protect and cherish.

We offer these principles as a gift to all who seek to build a sustainable and harmonious world community.

PREAMBLE

We speak as one, guided by the sacred teachings and spiritual traditions of the Four Directions that uplift, guide, protect, warn, inspire and challenge the entire human family to live in ways that sustain and enhance human life and the life of all who dwell on Mother Earth, and hereby dedicate our lives and energies to healing and developing ourselves, the web of relationships that make our world, and the way we live with Mother Earth.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*Starting from within, working in a circle, in a sacred manner,
we heal ourselves, our relationships and our world.*

STARTING FROM WITHIN

Human Beings Can Transform Their Worlds

The web of our relationships with others and the natural world, which has given rise to the problems we face as a human family, can be changed.

Development Comes From Within

The process of human and community development unfolds from within each person, relationship, family organization, community or nation.

No Vision, No Development

A vision of who we can become and what a sustainable world would be like, works as a powerful magnet, drawing us to our potential.

Healing Is A Necessary Part Of Development

Healing the past, closing up old wounds and learning healthy habits of thought and action to replace dysfunctional thinking and disruptive patterns of human relations is a necessary part of the process of sustainable development.

WORKING IN A CIRCLE

Interconnectedness

Everything is connected to everything else; therefore, any aspect of our healing and development is related to all the others (personal, social, cultural, political, economic, etc.). When we work on any one part, the whole circle is affected.

No Unity, No Development

Unity means oneness. Without unity, the common oneness that makes (seemingly) separate human beings into 'community' is impossible. Disunity is the primary disease of community.

No Participation, No Development

Participation is the active engagement of the minds, hearts and energy of the people in the process of their own healing and development.

Justice

Every person (regardless of gender, race, age, culture, religion) must be accorded equal opportunity to participate in the process of healing and development, and to receive a fair share of the benefits

IN A SACRED MANNER

Spirit

Human beings are both material and spiritual in nature. It is therefore inconceivable that human community could become whole and sustainable without bringing our lives into balance with the requirements of our spiritual nature.

Morals And Ethics

Sustainable human and community development requires a moral foundation centered in the wisdom of the heart. When this foundation is lost, morals and ethical principles decline and development stops.

The Hurt Of One Is The Hurt Of All: The Honor Of One Is The Honor Of All

The basic fact of our oneness as a human family means that development for some at the expense of well being for others is not acceptable or sustainable.

Authentic Development Is Culturally Based

Healing and development must be rooted in the wisdom, knowledge and living processes of the culture of the people.

WE HEAL AND DEVELOP OURSELVES, OUR RELATIONSHIPS AND OUR WORLD

Learning

Human beings are learning beings. We begin learning while we are still in our mother's wombs, and unless something happens to close off our minds and paralyze our capacities, we keep learning throughout our entire lives. Learning is at the core of healing and development.

Sustainability

To sustain something means to enable it to continue for a long time. Authentic development does not use up or undermine what it needs to keep on going.

Move To The Positive

Solving the critical problems in our lives and communities is best approached by visualizing and moving into the positive alternative that we wish to create, and by building on the strengths we already have, rather than on giving away our energy fighting the negative.

Be The Change You Want To See

The most powerful strategies for change always involve positive role modeling and the creation of living examples of the solutions we are proposing. By walking the path, we make the path visible.

Appendix II

A Brief History of the Sixteen Principles

The Sixteen Principles for Building a Harmonious and Sustainable World emerged from an extensive process of consultation with Indigenous spiritual, cultural and community leaders spanning more than two decades.

This consultation process began with an historic gathering that took place during the closing days of December, 1982, on the high plains of Southern Alberta. This gathering of forty traditional elders and community leaders came together to find a solution to the terrible darkness of substance abuse, poverty, suffering and death that seemed to have engulfed nearly every Indigenous community in Canada and the United States, and to share Indigenous visions and prophecies of the future.

Four core principles emerged from this traditional council that became the foundation and guiding framework for extensive development, learning and action in hundreds of communities around the world. These four core principles are as follows.

1. Development From Within

Healing and development must come from within the communities of people who desire change, and must largely be directed by those people.

2. No Vision; No Development

If the people have no vision of human possibility other than the one in which they find themselves, they cannot heal themselves, they cannot develop and, ultimately, they cannot survive. Culture is the mother of vision. Developing people need to rediscover the life-preserving, life-enhancing values and insights of their own traditional experience.

3. Individual and Community Development are connected.

The development of individuals and the development of their families and communities go hand-in-hand. Personal and social developments are interdependent.

4. A great Learning enterprise is required.

Learning drives the process of development. People have to learn how to live in the world as individuals, families and communities in new ways that are life-preserving and life-enhancing. Learning is the fundamental dynamic of human development.

Four years after the initial gathering (in 1987) another elders gathering was called to review the work under way, and the original four principles were expanded to seven, adding (at the direction of elders and spiritual leaders attending the second visioning conference) such concepts as “the spiritual and moral dimensions of development are inescapable”; development must be shaped and guided from within the culture of the people”, and the importance of integrating the “top-down and bottoms-up approaches”, because both grassroots participation and strong leadership as well as effective institutions are needed. In July, 1991, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society and Four Worlds International sponsored Gathering of

Native American elders in Loveland, Colorado, to further discuss the Guiding Principles and Indigenous visions and prophecies of the future.

Finally, for seven days, in both the summers of 1993 and 1994, major conferences were held in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada attended by some five hundred Indigenous peoples each year for reflection and dialogue on their experiences in healing and developing their communities. Based on this in-depth reflection and consultation process, Sixteen Guiding Principles emerged that included past principles, but much more clearly reflected what had been learned about what works, and what is needed in the process of community transformation toward sustainable well-being and prosperity.

It is important to note that these Sixteen Guiding Principles have been tested and reviewed by many Indigenous (and other) communities, and have been found to be an effective guide for positive transformational processes. A principle is not a recipe however; it is a statement of fundamental truth. It describes the nature of things as they are what is basic or essential, what works and what doesn't, what must be included, and what cannot be left out. These Sixteen Guiding Principles reflect the experiences and distilled wisdom of hundreds of communities and Indigenous nations as they struggle to heal themselves and develop a sustainable and harmonious pattern of life.

Finally, it is important to stress that these Sixteen Guiding Principles, as with all life, are in draft. They are not the last word. We have certainly not learned all that we have to learn. New guiding principles will emerge, and new insights about the meaning of the guiding principles we already know will come to light. Consider this an invitation to dialogue.