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Release: US Elects not to Seek Seat on UN Human Rights Council -- Pressure Builds for US Compliance with Indigenous Peoples Human Rights

April 7, 2006. Crescent Valley, NV (Newe Sogobia). The United States recently announced it will not seek election to the newly formed UN Human Rights Council (see US Press Statement below). The announcement was made in the wake of yet another UN treaty body formally taking up the issue of U.S. Federal Indian Law and Policy and ongoing violations of indigenous rights. Attached is the recently released Human Rights Committee's list of issues it will raise when it reviews the U.S.' Periodic Reports in July 2006. The question of human rights violations of Native Americans is first on the list under Articles 1 and 27. The specific inclusion of the indigenous rights issue by the Human Rights Committee comes just weeks after another UN treaty body, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) rendered a full decision under its Urgent Action/Early Warning Procedure against the United States and called for immediate action with regard to the Western Shoshone peoples of the Western Shoshone Nation.

The Human Rights Committee monitors state parties' compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. CERD is set up under the International Covenant on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. The United States is a ratified party to both UN Treaties.

The full review of the U.S. Periodic Reports is scheduled to take place before the Human Rights Committee in Geneva in July. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination will meet for its 69th Session in the first three weeks of August with review of the U.S.'s response or nonresponse to CERD's recent Decision on the Western Shoshone.

(Decision attached).

Press Statement Regarding US Decision Not to Seek Election to UN Human Rights Council

From the US Bush Administration:

Press Statement

Sean McCormack, Spokesman

Washington, DC

April 6, 2006

The United States Will Not Seek Election to the UN Human Rights Council

The United States will not run for a United Nations Human Rights Council seat in the Council's first election, scheduled for May 9, 2006. There are strong candidates in our regional group, with long records of support for human rights, that voted in favor of the resolution creating the Council. They should have the opportunity to run.

Since the drafting of the United Nations Charter, the United States has led the effort to promote human rights at the UN. From Eleanor Roosevelt's championing of the cause of human rights to the present day, our nation has led and must continue to lead at the UN and around the world. We will continue to do so.

As we said when voting on the Human Rights Council resolution March 15, the United States will work cooperatively with other Member States to make the Council as strong and effective as possible. We will support the Council and we will continue to fund it. We will work closely with partners in the international community to encourage the Council to address serious cases of human rights abuse in countries such as Iran, Cuba, Zimbabwe, Burma, Sudan, and North Korea.

Since the credibility of the Council depends on its membership, the United States will actively campaign on behalf of candidates genuinely committed to the promotion and protection of human rights, and which will act as responsible members of this new body. We will also actively campaign against states that systematically abuse human rights.

With a strong collective effort in the coming months to make the new Council effective, the United States will likely run for the Council next year.

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