

9.11.10



# UNITED INDIANS OF ALL TRIBES FOUNDATION

DAYBREAK STAR INDIAN CULTURAL-EDUCATIONAL CENTER

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**Executive Director**  
Bernie Whitebear  
(Colville)

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To the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians:

I am Bernie Whitebear, Executive Director of the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation of Seattle, Washington. I would like to thank the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians for extending this opportunity to present testimony in support of a Japanese-American Redress Bill.

Everyone knows that this country is founded upon fundamental principles of democracy guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. The forced relocation and detention of Japanese-Americans during World War II deprived our fellow American citizens of their freedom, livelihood, property and homes and violated these the most fundamental rights guaranteed by that same constitution.

People may ask why a Native American would be interested in this issue. The answers are simple. First, the Japanese-American Redress issue concerns a principle that affects every person in this country. That principle is that in times of peace and in times of stress, all of the people will be governed by a government that recognizes and protects all of our fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Should this Commission or the government reject or fail to condemn as repugnant the

illegal seizure and imprisonment of racial minorities, then there is little hope that this nation's minorities will fully participate in this country's affairs.

Secondly, I must point out to the Commission that this country has had a history of forced evacuation and detention of non-white Americans. One graphic example was the 1835 forced removal of the Cherokee people from their eastern seaboard homes to the empty wilderness of Oklahoma.

Thirdly, during the relocation of Japanese-Americans, Native Americans were also forceably removed from their homes and deprived of their property and livelihood. These Native Americans included Aleuts from Alaska as well as persons who were part Japanese and Native American. These individuals, who were born and raised in America and recognized by their tribal law as being American Indian or American Aleut, were nevertheless deprived of their civil rights without due process of law.

The fourth reason for my appearance is due to the effect the internment has had on the education of our children. In the schools our children are being taught that no person may be deprived of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness without the due process of law. How can our children be taught that this and the other principles of democracy are good and that facism and Communism are wrong without them wondering whether or not all adults and governments are hypocrites? It is intellectually very difficult for a child and probably for most adults to distinguish the difference between this government's removal and detention of its citizens because of their race without due process of law from Nazi Germany's imprisoning the Jews and Communists jailing dissidents.

Lastly, as an American citizen I am concerned with the image of this country. Our government, in its international affairs, preaches democracy and condemns the civil rights violations of other people. At the same time the American government committed some of those same acts without ever compensating its victims. Just as the German government admitted its wrongs and paid compensation for the crimes against the Jewish people, so too should this country admit to the world that it was wrong. Our government should take affirmative steps to rectify those wrongs against the victims and take positive measures to insure that this action will never be repeated. Acts such as this would not only restore our faith in our government, it would also enhance this nation's reputation of being a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

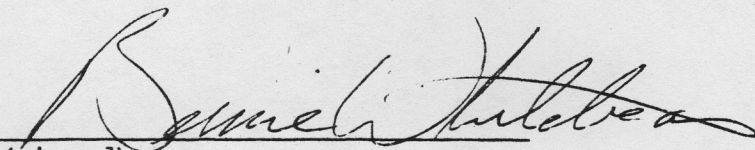
The Constitution provides that no person may be deprived of life, liberty or the pursuit of happiness without due process of law. That concept of due process of law includes provision by the government of just compensation for the taking of property for government use. There is no time limitation as to when the government should do this.

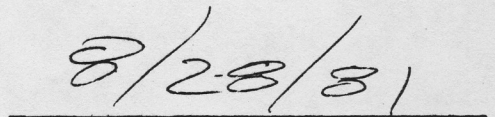
This country has recognized that its citizens may be called upon to serve its needs. At the same time, this country has always paid compensation for such services. There were veterans' benefits after each war and, after World War II, there was the War Claims Act compensating civilian American internees for having been imprisoned by this country's enemies. It is now time to recognize and compensate Japanese Americans for their service to this country.

Let there be no doubt that Japanese Americans served their country during and after its time of need. This service was rendered in the same patriotic manner and fashion as this nation's veterans and civilian internees. "Service

to this country" is the only term that can be used to describe the people who remained loyal to this country and its citizens even though, without benefit of due process, these Japanese-Americans were deprived of their freedom, livelihood, and homes, and they were detained for years behind guarded, barbed wired detention camps. It is, therefore, just and appropriate for this nation to compensate these people for taking five years of their lives, depriving them the use of their property, depriving them of their livelihood and depriving them of their self-respect when they considered themselves citizens.

I would submit that now is the time for this government and this nation to do its duty to its people who were sacrificed in violation of the Constitution.

  
Samuel Hales  
(signed)

  
8/28/81  
(date)