

THE GRAND COUNCIL OF THE HOUDENOSAUNEE
THE SIX NATIONS IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY
ONONDAGA NATION

February 5, 1978

Hon Nah Dah Guy Uss
The Honorable Jimmy Carter
President of the United States
White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Greetings Brother:

The Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy wishes to bring to your attention a disturbance that has been recently imposed upon us by one of your employees, in violation of our Treaties with the United States. The employee in question is Mr. Forrest Gerard, Assistant Secretary, Indian Affairs, Department of Interior. Mr. Gerard has recently issued a press release (see enclosed attachment) in which he states, "I, as trustee, will proceed unilaterally to represent the Oneida", as stated in paragraph of the enclosure.

It is our purpose to inform you that Mr. Gerard has made an error in the matter concerning the pending Oneida claims. The claims of the Oneida Nation for lands in New York are presently under litigation in proceeding including Docket 301 of the Indian Claims Commission.

The Oneida lands are not, and never have been, under the federal "trust responsibility". Therefore, Mr. Gerard has no authority to assume the title of "trustee" to Oneida land interests. The Treaty of 1784 guarantees that the Six Nations will continue in undisturbed possession of its lands. An action by Mr. Gerard which assumes authority over the interests of the Six Nations, or a member nation, is in violation of that treaty.

February 5, 1978

The alleged "factionalism" within the Oneida Nation, as it affects representation, has been resolved by the Six Nations in Council. (See enclosed attachment) Recent actions by Mr. Gerard, including the enclosed press release, only serve to prolong and misinterpret the procedures within the Oneida Nation which work toward a resolution of the Oneida claims.

Mr. Gerard, a Blackfoot Indian, states that he will "unilaterally" assume responsibility for the policy and destiny of the Oneida Nation. Under what authority does he presume to determine the best interest of the Oneida People? This presumption by Mr. Gerard represents a grave error in judgement and, if implemented, will result in an even graver injustice to the Oneida Nation.

We are confident that Mr. Gerard's statements in this matter are his own, and do not reflect the administration's position relative to the Oneida Nation. We are requesting that copies of all correspondence to Mr. Gerard concerning his position, relative to the Oneida claims (including Docket 301) be forwarded to the Six Nations Confederacy.

Signatures of Chiefs

Oneh,
THE GRAND COUNCIL OF CHIEFS
THE HOUDENOSAUNEE, SIX
NATION IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY

Chief Robert ...

Chief Ross David ...

Chief ... *Audrey Shenandoah*
Mrs. Audrey Shenandoah
Secretary

Chief ...

Chief ...

Chief ...