



THE INTERIOR ALLIANCE

Southern Carrier Stl'atl'imx Secwepemc
Nlaka'pamux Okanagan

c/o Shuswap Nation Tribal Council
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Chief Ervin Charleyboy
Chief Thomas Billyboy
Chief Roger William
Chief Leslie Stump
Chief Shirley Grambush-Johnny
A/Chief Frank Setah

May 24, 1999

RE: Tsilhqot'in Nation Withdrawal from Interior Alliance

Dear Tsilhqot'in Nation Chiefs:

This is to respond to the May 21, 1999 letter, sent by Chief Ervin Charleyboy, on your behalf, indicating your Nation's formal withdrawal from the Interior Alliance.

It is regrettable that you have chosen to close yourselves off from the rest of our Interior Alliance Nations. However, there are several points we wish to make directly to you, in response to Chief Charleyboy's letter.

Chief Charleyboy's letter states that the reason the Tsilhqot'in Nation is breaking off formal political ties with the Interior Alliance, is because the Tsilhqot'in Nation will

not be bound by any negotiation processes that may compromise our nation sovereignty or consultation with Crown Governments of Canada . . . We alone will guide our destiny and there cannot be any compromise, direct or implied that we have delegated our Title and Rights to our territory to any other entity. (Emphasis added)

By the above statement Chief Charleyboy is implying that the Interior Alliance is "compromising" Tsilhqot'in Sovereignty, Title and Rights, and seeking a "delegation" of Tsilhqot'in authority in a "negotiation process".

Chief Charleyboy's statement is incorrect, because it gives a mistaken impression about the intentions of the Interior Alliance to the B.C. Premier and the Canadian Prime Minister, not to mention anyone else from within the Interior Alliance that may read Chief Charleyboy's May 21, 1999, letter.

First of all, as you know, the Chairmen and Representatives of the Interior Alliance Nations, including the Tsilhqot'in, have been developing a "living accord" for over a year now. The principles of this "living accord" include respecting the sovereignty, Aboriginal title and rights of each member Nation within the Interior Alliance. In fact, the main purpose of the Interior Alliance is to promote unity and mutual support when dealing with Crown governments.

The "living accord" also spells out the role of the "Leaders Council", nowhere does the Interior Alliance "living accord" provide for "compromising" the Tsilhqot'in Nation's Sovereignty, title and Rights, or that of any other member Nation. Let us repeat, Chief Charleyboy's letter is false in this regard.

Secondly, we have prepared and sent the Interior Alliance Nations, including the Tsilhqot'in Nation, a "draft" provincial Bilateral Agreement for review and discussion. The proposed provincial agreement provides for a proposed bilateral process that could eventually lead to Treaty-making in an alternative process, which doesn't require the extinguishment of our respective Aboriginal title and rights, as the British Columbia Treaty Commission process now does.

We have proceeded to develop a draft agreement for discussion within the Interior Alliance Nations, precisely because the provincial and federal governments are accelerating their threats to our respective Aboriginal title and Rights, and we must take action to protect our Aboriginal title and Rights from these threats. One of these actions is agreeing on a common process(es) as provided for in our "living accord".

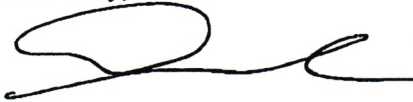
Thirdly, we have tried over the past few months to meet with the Tsilhqot'in Nation Chiefs to discuss any concerns, feedback or comments regarding the "living accord" of the Interior Alliance, amongst other matters, but it has been futile because there has been little or no response to our repeated requests.

Fourthly, it is regrettable that Chief Charleyboy, in his May 21, 1999, letter, chose to convey a false impression to Premier Clark and Prime Minister Chretien about the relations between the Interior Alliance and the Tsilhqot'in Nation, because it only serves to undermine our collective efforts in dealing with these governments.

If there were concerns from you as Chiefs, about my actions as Spokesperson for the Interior Alliance, it would have been more respectful to meet face-to-face with me instead of sending false signals to the primary representatives of the settler governments.

In closing, let us say that we respect your decision to sever formal ties with our Interior Alliance, but we would like you to at least come to the next meeting of the Interior Alliance (SNTC Office, June 4, 1999), so that we could explain to you our reasons for advancing the proposed provincial Bilateral Agreement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Arthur Manuel', written over a horizontal line.

Chief Arthur Manuel
Neskonlith Indian Band
Chairman, Shuswap Nations Tribal Council
Spokesperson, Interior Alliance

Cc. Interior Alliance Leaders Council
Chief Stewart Phillip, President, UBCIC