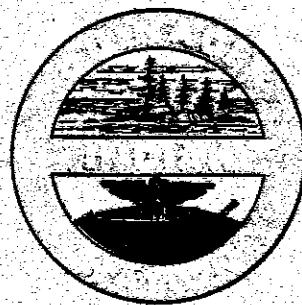


STATE OF THE QUINAUT NATION



Office of the President

**Joe DeLaCruz
President**

**Meeting of the General Council
March 29, 1980**

Office of the President
Message to the General Council
29, March, 1980

The Quinault Nation is at war. We are engaged in a war of survival. The people of our Nation will decide whether we survive or disappear into history. What the people say and do will decide our future.

I would like to speak with you today about some of the things I have been hearing from the community. Some of the good things and some of the bad. Some concerns about what we have done in the past and some concerns about the future.

Some say that times are going to get hard. Federal programs and monies are going to dry up and credit is going to be hard to get. Some say that Indian people will suffer, that the Quinault people will suffer. To these people I have to say that they are right. Tribal economies all over North America are experiencing serious pressures and natural resource shortages are increasing every day. The Quinault Nation, the United States and the peoples of the world are experiencing these pressures. But I have to say that times have never been easy for our peoples. You can ask James Jackson or Horton Capoeman and they will tell you about hard times the Quinault peoples have suffered through. We have them to thank, and lots of others, for getting us through those difficult times. They served in the general council, on the business committee on inter-tribal councils, boards and congregations. They went away from the Reservation as delegates and witnesses to protect the Quinault land and the people of the nation. Because of their successes, the Quinault Nation survived economic and political challenges from both within and outside our boundaries.

Our lands, the health and security of our children, our fishing and timber, our rights to exist as a people and to govern ourselves have been under constant threat for five generations — just as they are today. In this past generation we have worked hard to use our resources to build a secure home for Quinault people so our economy will be self sufficient and our religious, educational and governmental institutions will be strong. This is so our people will be strong with a commitment to a strong nation. Many of the goals we have all had for the tribe have been reached through the work of the General Council, the Business committee and many individuals in the Tribe.

We have enacted a Tribal code of laws and a new constitution to protect the rights of individuals and the self-governing authority of the Quinault Nation. The Tribal Legal Code is not perfect, nor is it unchangeable, but it is the first time we have set out our tribal laws in a way so that all of our citizens can know the laws of our land. The Constitution is not a perfect instrument, but it can be our collective strength if we fully use it and live by its principles. As a people we can be strong if our laws are respectful of our customs and the way we live. If they need changing then we all have a responsibility to participate in the process that leads to positive changes. But without a working structure of laws, we will be lost. Those who would do injury to the Quinault Nation would have an easier time if we did not have our own laws. We would be lost.

We have been builders — realizing many dreams of the Quinault people with construction of a new fish processing plant, a new multipurpose center at Queets, new housing, the national fish hatchery, the shake and shingle mill, and most importantly, a new school building for our children.

As a people we have worked to establish programs and enterprises that serve the needs of our people; we have used our resources to develop the economy of the Reservation, and we have created jobs for Quinaults never before available. All of these developments work to fulfill our goal of a strong Quinault tribal economy.

In the courts, in the U.S. Congress and in the offices of the federal and state bureaucracies we have fought to protect our rights as a people. Even as we work to build strength in our homes and throughout the Reservation, political and economic forces outside our territory continue to challenge our rights and our way of life. We are forced to meet those challenges wherever they occur to protect our treaty fishing rights, to increase our tribal land base and to protect our right to self government.

None of our goals have been fully achieved, of course, and none of the successes we have chalked up have been easy to achieve. Two major issues among many are of special concern to the peace and security of the Quinault Nation today. The battle to control our salmon and steelhead fisheries continues relentlessly even though the famous "Boldt" decision which upheld our rights, was handed down over six years ago. This battle continues even though the United States Supreme Court affirmed the original decision last summer. The fishing rights fight now involves many people and even more special interests. We cannot be safe from external challenges to our rights even inside our Reservation. To be successful in this fight we will have to increase our commitment to self regulation and discipline while we move from the court room to the U.S. Congress and even to international commissions and organizations that now have a say in what happens to the fish that originate in our rivers. To protect our rights, to catch salmon and steelhead we must protect the fish themselves — we must protect the environment around the fish as our grandfathers did generations ago. This is a battle we cannot afford to lose. Our most creative minds and our collective will to survive as a people are our most important weapons. The test of our spirit as a people is before us.

The fishing rights conflict is equaled in its intensity by yet another challenge to the survival of the Quinault Nation: the threat of termination as espoused by non-Quinault land owners. Over the years the Quinault Nation has been challenged in many of its actions by non-Quinaults who claim rights in the Reservation and its government because they have interests in Trust allotments on the reservation. Their present challenge, asking the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a federally imposed constitutional election on the Quinault Reservation in which they could vote, is one of the most serious challenges we face. Such an externally imposed political action would destroy the Quinault Nation as we know it. Ever since the time when the Indian Reorganization Act was first proposed to the U.S. Congress in 1933 by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the leaders of the Quinault people have rejected its provisions. Our records show that organization of our government under the Indian Reorganization Act (I.R.A.) was rejected by our elders first because they had already organized the Quinault government and there was no need for external interference. Secondly, the Quinault peoples opposed organizing our government under the I.R.A. because they recognized that such U.S. government interference would allow the United States government to heavily control our tribal laws and the way we make our decisions. Our people saw that the most basic right of the Quinault peoples would be taken away — the right of self government. That danger was averted when the Quinault Nation chose to establish its own government and make its own decisions. The non-Quinault land holders would now try to overthrow our present system of government by urging the U.S. Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to take control of the Quinault Nation. The people of the Quinault Nation cannot permit external governments or interests to interfere in our internal affairs. The rights and interests of generations of Quinault people are at stake.

In the coming months and years we will be faced with sustained challenges to our way of life and our government. We must be prepared to meet these challenges with care, skill, diligence and careful reasoning. We must understand the threats to our continuing existence and work to support one another. I ask you all to work with our elders and elected leaders to resolve the dispute with the non-Quinault landholders in a positive way that in-

sure the survival of the Quinault Nation. We must stop external attempts to disrupt our communities and our government by placing the future of the Quinault Nation above all considerations.

We must think of our children and the generations of Quinault people to come. We know times have been hard for our elders and for us. We hope that our children will have a more peaceful and comfortable life; that they will learn from our families and our schools the Quinault way of life, and what our future can be if we meet the challenges of today. Our answer to those who would destroy the Quinault Nation must be that we have survived through worse times and that no time has been easy. If we work together for our way of life and for our children we can build a secure homeland for the Quinault people for thousands of years to come.

To meet the threats to the Quinault Nation I propose that we organize ourselves so that every home, every family, our fishermen, workers and teachers fully participate in Quinault self government. Our government must come from every home so that the decisions of our people will in fact be the decisions of our government. Family leaders must call together our people in meetings all over the reservation every week or several times in the month to pass on information about the battles that face us. We must mobilize our people to save the Quinault Nation. I pledge the resources of the Quinault Government and the members of the Business committee to support and attend these meetings. I propose that we begin now a process that includes all of our people to organize the families and communities and the Quinault government in a discussion of the issues and the setting of new priorities for the future of the Quinault Nation. Our survival as a nation depends on our discipline and our will.