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"Listen: the Voice of the Indigenous People"

by

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U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Native American Heritage Program  
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Good morning-Commissioner Dicus, Commissioner Merrifield, Dr. Travers, Mrs. Norry, Mrs. Little, Ms. Williams, and NRC employees-and a very special welcome to our distinguished guest, Dr. Bucholz.

The national theme of our Native American Heritage celebration this year, "The Voice of the Indigenous People," is a theme that should prompt an auditory response-in other words, it is a call for us to listen--to listen to a voice that sometimes has been drowned out by the commotion of "Modern Civilization"; to listen to the voice of a people who have managed to keep ancient traditions and cultures alive in the middle of this busy, self-important Twentieth Century, and who have found a variety of ways to remain connected to their past without being bound by it. The connection of Native Americans to their past has made a remarkable contribution to our modern world-not just because of the cultural, medical, agricultural, and environmental skills they have shared with us, but because Native Americans have embodied the idea that connection to one's heritage is valuable-that awareness of one's ethnicity is cause for pride. Regardless of our individual roots-whether our heritage is Asian or Western European or African or Slavic or Middle Eastern or some combination of these or other backgrounds-we owe a debt of gratitude, and we can learn, from the "pride-in-heritage" that Native Americans have quietly preserved in the face of adversity. Listen: the voice of the indigenous people!

The richness and diversity of Native American civilizations often go unremarked or forgotten. At the same time, at some level, many of us think of Native American traditions as a reservoir of untapped wisdom-similar to the traditions of indigenous cultures in South America or Africa or Australia-wisdom that modern culture is only beginning to appreciate as we gain new perspectives on modern medical and environmental and social issues.

Let me give you some examples of Native American contributions:

- ◆ Native Americans introduced many new crops to incoming Europeans and to the world. According to Texas Parks and Wildlife, "Two-thirds of the crops under cultivation today were given to the rest of the world by Native Americans"--such crops as American sweet peppers, squash, corn, tomatoes, peanuts, green beans, kidney beans, paprika, cranberries, pecans, and even potatoes. "All of these were unknown in Europe prior to the discovery of the Americas."
- ◆ Native Americans were the first to practice land management and environmental safety to preserve their environment. Many anthropologists subscribe to the idea that land determines lifestyles. The amazing adaptability of Native Americans to a challenging land is evident in their tenacious response to harsh climates and predators of all kinds. Native Americans preserved forests and natural grasses by controlled burns of the prairie-using "backfires" in ways still employed today-to create new growth or control the migration of animals. Native Americans helped to form our modern-day concepts of medicine and pharmacology. Many tribes practiced surgical procedures and created medicines from herbs and oils. The Aztecs understood the role of the heart and blood flow, and used this knowledge in their approaches to circulatory problems, nutrition, and disease. Holistic approaches to healing, involving routine cleansing of the mind, body, and soul, were practiced all over the Americas.

As we remind ourselves of the gifts and contributions of Native Americans to our lives, we begin to understand the dimensions of the debt we owe to them. We begin to understand the ways in which they are a part of our shared modern heritage. The history of Native Americans is a journey through time, a journey with distant roots, and a journey that is far from over. Listen: the voice of the indigenous people!

Let me take a few moments to introduce our guest speaker, Dr. Roger Bucholz, a man who, in his own right, serves as "a voice of the indigenous people." Dr. Bucholz has netted together a web of professional and tribal achievements. He continues to speak forcefully to ensure that Native Americans have a voice in enhancing their economic, cultural, traditional, and environmental growth and prosperity.

Dr. Bucholz is Sioux Indian, and was raised on the Dakota Reservation. While in the U.S. Navy, he completed graduate and post-graduate work in physics at the College of William and Mary, and received his doctorate from George Mason University. Dr. Bucholz completed 10 years of commissioned service before retiring from the Navy at the rank of Lieutenant Commander, and taking a position as head of the Fiber Optics Division at Atlantic Research Corporation. He later started his own company, Red Hawk Laboratory, where he currently uses his talent, networking ability, and tribal connections to support Native American social, economic, environmental, and community development causes. Dr. Bucholz has been honored repeatedly for his achievements, and he has been designated as the official "pipe

bearer," or ceremonial leader, for the Lower Sioux Indian Community. Dr. Bucholz and his wife, Frankie Jo, have three sons-all of whom graduated from The Citadel in South Carolina, and who now serve, respectively, in the Army, the National Guard, and the Marine Reserves.

Please join me in welcoming our distinguished guest, Dr. Roger Bucholz.