

Treaty breaches and the u.s government



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ The greatest danger to American freedom is a government that ignores the Constitution.” – Thomas Jefferson. Since the first contact with the Europeans, native peoples in the U. S have been battling with powerful government bodies and have repeatedly lost. Looking back to even before the founding of the Union, native populations have went to war against the progressive, overpowering and belittling nature of the government and have walked away with disease, famine and useless treaties. It is these bitter roots that have affected the native nations in the U. S even today. Battle scars of decades past can still be seen on reservations throughout the United States. This isn't a game of finders keepers, there needs to be a fair way to allocate rights and privileges for our nations indigenous populations, different than those weak treaties and broken promises that were the usual way of business in our history. Recent news shows the blatant disregard of native populations in South Dakota with the Dakota Access Pipeline. This is just one of many actions taken by the U. S government that completely goes against treaties explicitly written to protect those nations. The spot light is now shining brightly on the President and the governing body. Now is the time to reveal all the shadows cast on treaty breaches, and finally bring to light all the malpractices and wrongdoings conducted in our great nation's history.

As defined by Webster's Dictionary, " Treaty", is a term that describes a contract in writing between two or more political authorities (such as states or sovereigns) formally signed by representatives duly authorized and usually ratified by the lawmaking authority of the state. Article II, Section II and Clause II of the U. S Constitution, clearly explains the role of treaties and how to develop and manage them within the Constitution. (1). In order to

make a change for the better, we must understand how treaties are made and how they are handled within our government. By understanding this, we can start to spread the word and educate more people so the issue is broadcasted across the masses. Once people are informed, they can decide to make a change. By exposing the treaty breaches, and understanding how things should be handled, only then can we start to reverse and redact the wrongdoings done by the U. S government. Additionally, supporters like myself of the native nations agree that these treaty breaches are a direct violation of the 1st amendment. The 1st amendment reads, " Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." (2). By neglecting to follow treaties set up to protect Indian land, culture and well- being, the U. S Government is in direct violation of the very systems they fought to create. Yes, separating ourselves from the tyrant of Great Britain is fine and all, but it means nothing if we act the same way as our former crown and oppress and annihilate our native populations.

We all know that as U. S citizens, we must abide and follow the laws written in the Constitution. That being said, when the treaties in the mid 1800's were written and passed, they allowed certain unalienable rights to federally recognized indigenous nations. These federally recognized tribes were placed on reservations and were allowed to have a separate law system than the state they reside in. However, these nations must still follow the U. S Constitution and are subject to federal discretion.

When looking at an issue of this magnitude, many people will ask how it affects the common good of our nation. We shouldn't ask how it affects us, we should ask how we can help to diffuse the situation and clear tension between the native peoples and the U. S government. As a nation, we must understand that the treaty agreements were put in place to compensate for a loss of a way of life, land, and government control in the Indian nations. For the sake of our nation, we must come together and solve the issues relating to the mistreatment of our Native American friends. There is a misconception regarding the natives receiving special treatment from the government. It's quite the opposite. We need to educate those, and help bridge the gap between enrolled tribal members and white America. Instead of isolating native people as a different group of people, we need to shuck the mentality of our ancestors and combine cultures and mentalities to ensure the common good of our great country is upheld.

Is oil production more important than the destruction of pristine ecosystems, destruction of reservation land, and the possibility of contaminating an entire watershed? Not to mention the further destruction of indigenous culture and political scandal. We are in trying times. This is the question millions of Native Americans are asking themselves as they protest against the building of the Dakota Access Pipeline. The tribe has led protests that drew hundreds and at times thousands of people who dubbed themselves " water protectors" to an encampment near the crossing. (3). The pipeline protestors all believe that the oil line will only bring harm. This has been such a large controversy, that like other native-white clashes, there have been lawsuits filed and Constitutional rights questioned. The most recent court case was

February 9th , Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe vs. U. S Army Corps of engineers.

(4). The Cheyenne Sioux filed to halt the operations on reservation land.

Proponents of the pipeline say that the economic benefit is very high, and that this project will benefit the whole region. Whether you're for the pipeline or in complete opposition like most of the U. S's native population, it's important to take into consideration both sides of the argument.

“ The greatest danger to American freedom is a government that ignores the Constitution.” - Thomas Jefferson. We can't be successful as a nation if we are constantly questioning our government. If we as citizens are in doubt of our freedom, then the words written on that sheet of parchment paper in 1776 mean nothing, much how natives see the treaties in that document as well, meaningless phrases and transparent promises. We have struggled in civil wars and recent terrorist attacks that have sparked nationalism and made Americans value their way of life. We can't keep disregarding the native populations and hoping they will just roll over and take it. The founders of America had a dream, build an empire where people could be free, and enjoy natural rights. I think our government has lost sight of that dream. The constant oppression and mistreatment of American Indians is a mindset over a hundred years old. When we open our minds and fully understand how the Constitution can guide us all is when we will truly unite as one nation. Let's not be stuck in General Custer's mindset, we don't have to march hastily into impending doom. We are in a position to slow down, think about the future, help remedy the past, and come together as a nation to ensure that the U. S will always be the Home of the Free Because of the Brave.

Works cited

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