

The museum's location on the Mall is fitting, because the American Indian experience is central to the American story. That story has involved great injustice against native peoples and great contribution by native peoples.

We remember Sacagawea's presence with Lewis and Clark. What a heroic woman she was. We remember the patriotism and bravery of the Code Talkers in World War II. We're still looking for Clarence Wolf Guts. [Laughter] We also remember all the Native Americans who fought to defend America, including the 17 American service personnel we just recognized here.

Native Americans have supported this country during its times of need, and their contributions have made America stronger and better. Decades ago, there were some who viewed American Indians as the vanishing Americans, people on the margins of our national life. Yet, the exhibits in the new museum and the museum itself carry a different message. Many of its staff and curators are Native Americans, and the exhibits are created in close consultation with the tribes.

The National Museum of the American Indian shows how your ancestors once lived, and it does much more than that. It affirms that you and your tribal governments are strong and vital today and provides a place to celebrate your present achievements and your deepest hopes for the future. It allows all Americans to experience the rich culture of the American Indian.

Native American cultures survive and flourish when tribes retain control over their own affairs and their own future. That is why, earlier this morning, I signed an Executive memorandum to all Federal agencies reaffirming the Federal Government's long-standing commitment to respect tribal sovereignty and self-determination. My Government will continue to honor this government-to-government relationship.

Long before others came to the land called America, the story of this land was yours alone. Indians on this continent had their own languages and customs, just as you have today. They had jurisdiction over their lands and territories, just as you have today. And these sovereign tribal nations had their own

systems of self-governance, just as you have today.

The National Museum of Indian Affairs affirms that this young country is home to an ancient, noble, and enduring native culture. And all Americans are proud of that culture. Like many Indian dwellings, the new museum building faces east, toward the rising sun. And as we celebrate this new museum and we look to the future, we can say that the sun is rising on Indian country.

Welcome to the White House. May God bless you. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:35 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado and his wife, Linda; and Clarence Wolf Guts, World War II veteran and Lakota Sioux code talker.

## **Memorandum on Government-to-Government Relationship With Tribal Governments**

*September 23, 2004*

*Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies*

*Subject: Government-to-Government Relationship with Tribal Governments*

The United States has a unique legal and political relationship with Indian tribes and a special relationship with Alaska Native entities as provided in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, and Federal statutes. Presidents for decades have recognized this relationship. President Nixon announced a national policy of self-determination for Indian tribes in 1970. More recently, Executive Order 13175, entitled Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, was issued in 2000. I reiterated my Administration's adherence to a government-to-government relationship and support for tribal sovereignty and self-determination earlier this year in Executive Order 13336, entitled American Indian and Alaska Native Education.

My Administration is committed to continuing to work with federally recognized

tribal governments on a government-to-government basis and strongly supports and respects tribal sovereignty and self-determination for tribal governments in the United States. I take pride in acknowledging and reaffirming the existence and durability of our unique government-to-government relationship and these abiding principles.

This commitment begins at the White House, where my Director of Intergovernmental Affairs serves as my White House liaison with all Indian nations and works with federally recognized tribal governments on an intergovernmental basis. Moreover, it is critical that all departments and agencies adhere to these principles and work with tribal governments in a manner that cultivates mutual respect and fosters greater understanding to reinforce these principles.

Accordingly, the head of each executive department and agency (agency) shall continue to ensure to the greatest extent practicable and as permitted by United States law that the agency's working relationship with federally recognized tribal governments fully respects the rights of self-government and self-determination due tribal governments. Department or agency inquiries regarding this memorandum, specifically those related to regulatory, legislative, or budgetary issues, should be directed to the Office of Management and Budget.

This memorandum is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not, create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, by a party against the United States, its agencies, entities, or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

**George W. Bush**

### **The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of Iraq**

*September 23, 2004*

**President Bush.** Thank you all for coming. I'm honored to stand with the Prime Minister of a free and sovereign Iraq. Welcome, Mr. Prime Minister. I applaud your

leadership and your courage. It's my honor to welcome a friend to the White House.

**Prime Minister Allawi.** Thank you.

**President Bush.** Mr. Prime Minister, you've accomplished a great deal in less—in the 3 months since the transition to a free Iraq that is governed by Iraqis. These have been months of steady progress, despite persistent violence in some parts of your country. Iraqis and their leaders are engaged in a great and historic enterprise to establish a new democracy at the heart of a vital region.

As friends of liberty, the new leaders of Iraq are friends of America and all civilized nations. As enemies of tyranny and terror, the people of Iraq and the American troops and civilians supporting their dreams of freedom have been the target of acts of violence. The enemies of freedom are using suicide bombing, beheadings, and other horrific acts to try to block progress. We're sickened by the atrocities, but we'll never be intimidated. And freedom is winning.

Mr. Prime Minister, America will stand with you until freedom and justice have prevailed. America's security and Iraq's future depend on it.

The Iraqi people are showing great courage and great determination. As terrorists have attacked Iraqi security forces, still more brave Iraqis have come forward to volunteer to serve their country. As killers have attempted to assassinate Government officials, Iraq's leaders have refused to be intimidated, and the vast majority of Iraqis remain committed to democracy.

The path to our safety and to Iraq's future as a democratic nation lies in the resolute defense of freedom. If we stop fighting the terrorists in Iraq, they would be free to plot and plan attacks elsewhere, in America and other free nations. To retreat now would betray our mission, our word, and our friends. Mr. Prime Minister, America will keep its commitments.

The path ahead is difficult because a free Iraq has deadly enemies. Remnants of the old regime and terrorist groups want to prevent Iraq's elections and demoralize Iraq's allies. Because of that, Prime Minister Allawi and I believe terrorist violence may well escalate as the January elections draw near. The