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IN RECOGNITION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHIEF OREN LYONS OF THE ONONDAGA NATION OF THE IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY TO THE PUBLICATION OF "EXILED IN THE LAND OF THE FREE"

• Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of the important contributions that a highly respected Indian leader, Chief Oren Lyons of the Onondaga Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy, has made to a publication that will be officially presented to the Select Committee on Indian Affairs on October 12, 1992. I am proud to call this great leader my friend and advisor.

Mr. President, in November of 1986, I assumed the position of the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs. At that time, I am sad to report that like many other Americans, I knew very little about the contributions that this Nation's first Americans have made to the fabric of American society. I was soon to learn that the ignorance regarding the native people of America is pervasive.

Apparently, few Americans are aware that the fundamental structure of our democratic form of government has its origins in the Iroquois Confederacy. Many may not know that the debates of the Continental Congress contain many references to the Indian nations. Few know that it was the Indians who enabled Gen. George Washington and his troops to survive the winter at Valley Forge. It is not well known that Indian people fought side by side with the soldiers of the American Revolution, nor is it well known that more American Indians have served in the Armed Forces of the United States in every military action since the time of the

Revolutionary War, in numbers proportionately far greater than any other ethnic group in the United States.

Many Americans have no idea that historians and anthropologists suggest that there were a minimum of 19 million, and as many as 50 million native people residing in the land that subsequently became the United States prior to European contact. And because the era known as the Indian wars era is not typically documented in basic history primers, it may well be that most Americans are unaware that the effort to control greater areas of land then occupied by the Indians, decimated the Indian population so effectively that there were approximately 200,000 Indian people remaining in the United States at the end of the Indian wars era.

Nor is the fact that Indian people once exercised dominion and control over 550 million acres of land, and that through conquest, and all too frequently misrepresentation, those lands were systematically taken from the Indians, so that today, they are left with less than 50 million acres of land.

The Indian nations entered into 800 treaties with the United States. Those were solemn and sacred documents that promised the Indians that "as long as the rivers flow, and the Sun rises in the east", the lands and the resources that had been secured to them would be protected in perpetuity. In exchange for the cession of vast amounts of land, the Indians were promised that the Great White Father would provide them with health care and education for all the generations to come.

The Indian people lived up to the commitments they made in those treaties. They sacrificed their ancestral homes, the lands upon which they hunted and fished and gathered berries

and roots for their subsistence. They were and remain today people who revere the mother Earth and her bounty, people who were environmentalists and conservationists long before those terms gained common currency.

However, those 800 treaties were only honored unilaterally. The U.S. Senate refused to ratify ~~any~~ of them, even though the Government charged the Indians with living up to the terms of those treaties. Even more tragically, of the 370 treaties that were ratified, the United States proceeded to violate provisions in every single one.

Perhaps it is because there are many chapters in what we term "American" history which record atrocities and cruelties of the worst kind imposed upon the native people of America, that our history books evidence a reluctance to view American history from the perspective of native people.

So it is with much enthusiasm that I commend this publication to the American people. Our children and their children should know the true story of our history. They should read from those pages of history of which we can be proud, and they should also know that there are a people of this Nation upon whose ancestral lands we now reside—a people who sacrificed their homelands so that we could build a country called America—a people who despite the great adversity we thrust upon them, gave generously of themselves in very respect. This is a chapter of history that we must all have the opportunity to learn and a chapter that we, as Americans, must never forget.

Mr. President, I call upon my colleagues to join me in expressing our deep appreciation to Chief Oren Lyons for his years of dedication to this effort.