

STATEMENT OF CARL J. ARTMAN
NOMINEE FOR THE POSITION OF
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INDIAN AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

FEBRUARY 1, 2007

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, Senators, my name is Carl Artman. It is a privilege and an honor to appear before you this morning seeking your confirmation of my nomination by President Bush to be the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.

I am a member of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, one of six Indian nations of the Haudenosaunee, or Iroquois Confederacy. I have served my Tribe in positions ranging from the tribal representative in Washington, DC to Chief Operating Officer in a telecommunications partnership, to, most recently, Chief Counsel of the Tribe. I currently serve as the Associate Solicitor for Indian Affairs in the Office of the Solicitor within the Department of the Interior.

I am honored to have been nominated by President Bush and look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead.

Secretary Kempthorne and I have had numerous conversations about Native American matters. I share Secretary Kempthorne's views on education, economic development, substance abuse, and other matters important to tribal governments. I look forward to sharing the Secretary's vision for the relationship between the Department of the Interior and Indian Country, and in encouraging a conversation about that relationship. The Secretary has expressed his confidence in me to bring what he has described as an ambassadorial nature to the position of Assistant Secretary.

Indian Country provides an overwhelming number of challenges: substance abuse, high unemployment rates on many reservations, lack of adequate health care, dilapidated education facilities, crumbling infrastructures from roads to irrigation ditches, and crime outpacing law enforcement personnel and funds. And then there are the issues unique to Indian country such as the retention of sovereignty and maintaining and expanding self-governance and self-determination.

If you were to ask me why I want this job, my answer would be that I am drawn to respond to those seemingly insurmountable obstacles for Indians and Alaskan Natives. I see the determination and the potential of Indians and Alaskan Natives. Reservation populations are growing. Leaders are digging in to stem the spread of substance abuse and the lawlessness that follows in its wake. Teachers at tribal schools provide more with

less. Inch by inch tribes are reclaiming their land and the inherent rights of such ownership.

As Indians and Alaskan Natives reclaim rights lost through history or societal plagues, the Department of the Interior must be their partner in these battles. I will contribute to a more accessible and expeditious Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education to assist tribal and Alaskan Native communities to develop their natural, political, and socio-economic infrastructure.

A primary goal of mine will be measurable engagement in the battle to eradicate methamphetamine abuse from reservations and tribal communities. I will focus on three areas meant to work in concert to be the beginning of the end of this cancer. First, I want to bolster the power of the BIA's Office of Justice Services to offer assistance in the form of money, manpower, technology, and education to the tribes that need the most assistance. Second, I want to ensure the good work that has already begun in the Bureau of Indian Education continues. A reorganized regional structure and a focus on foundational needs will result in an excellent education for the students enrolled in the second largest school system in the nation. And third, I will focus on economic development in Indian Country. The Department's Office of Indian Economic and Energy Development will become both a resource and a thought leader in economic development in Indian Country. We will bring together influential leaders from Indian governments, finance, business, and business education to focus on the development of sustainable tribal economies.

I will continue the discussion, started by the Secretary, with leaders of all facets of the broader tribal community; and I will listen for where the Department and Federal Government may help tribes and their members gain traction.

The Department of the Interior can and will be a positive force in Indian Country. If confirmed, I will lay the foundation for an era that will provide new commitments, through action, to programmatic goals and mandated duties.

If confirmed, I will foster an interaction born of a partnership and mutual goals, not just fiduciary requirements.

If confirmed, I will use the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs to promote communications between tribes that have realized financial success and those that strive for a fraction of that success to move beyond provision of subsistence benefits for their membership. The success of one tribe, either in business, government administration, or cultural preservation, is the best incubator for success of other tribes.

I will use the Office to promote more vibrant and goal-oriented communications between tribes and their neighbors.

I hope to foster the growth of tribal governments. Tribal sovereignty is inherent, and this sovereignty is best exhibited in a vibrant tribal government that understands

judicious exercise of its jurisdiction for the benefits of its members and the seventh generation. Tribal governments embody the power of sovereignty. It cares for the present and plans for the future. It is what the outside examines to judge the health of the tribe.

To lead their people and improve their communities, tribal governments must be able to fight the obstacles that foster hopelessness. If confirmed, I will bring forth the potential of the breadth and depth of the Department of the Interior, and specifically the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, so that Indians and Alaskan Natives can use these resources – their resources – to conquer the problems bearing down on their governments and people, to gain that foothold that will propel them upward, to preserve a culture and build a legacy, and to provide a future for their seventh generation that is as great as their past.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, Senators, thank you.