

Pascua Lama & Barrick Gold

Grand Chief Ron Evans – Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

Chief Sheldon Kent – Black River First Nation

Chilean Tour

January 12 to January 19, 2006

Thursday, January 12, 2006

Meeting with Ambassador Bernard Giroux (Canadian Embassy to Chile)

Our First Nations delegation met with the Canadian Ambassador on Thursday, January 12, 2006, the meeting allowed for our leaders to discuss the deployment of the Black River project in Chile (Ojibway/Williche Well-Being & Health Care Initiative) along with the Indigenous partnerships that are being developed between Black River First Nation, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Indigenous Peoples of Chile. Grand Chief Evans spoke to the Ambassador about Barrick Gold a Canadian gold mining company and its proposed Pascua Lama Gold Mining Project. The Grand Chief informed the Ambassador that the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs plans to work very closely with the Diaguita People of the Pascua Lama Valley (Region III of Chile) to ensure the project does not negatively or adversely impact their way of life.

Friday, January 13, 2006

Meeting with Barrick Gold Corp

The delegation met with Barrick Gold, on Friday, January 13, 2006, they would not allow the filming of the meeting nor grant an interview at their corporate offices in Toronto. Mr. Rod Jiminez, a representative of Barrick Gold in South America informed our delegation that everything is under control with Pascua Lama and everyone is content with the project.

Saturday, January 14, 2006

Meeting with Daquita Leaders

Grand Chief Evans met with Nancy Yanez (a lawyer with the Observatorio de Derechos de los Pueblos Indigenas) and two Daquita leaders on Saturday, January 14, 2006, in Vina del Mar. These leaders who attended the meeting took a bus 10 hours to meet Grand Chief Evans and Chief Kent at their own expense. The meeting with these leaders was overwhelming as they informed us about the Pascua Lama project and the way they have been treated by Barrick Gold during the development phase of the project. The Diaquita leadership felt they have not been consulted and fear they will have few opportunities to protect and preserve their culture in the event that the mine is approved by the Chilean government.

We were told that the Diaguita People are the original owners of the land and feel their concerns (environmental, social, economic and political) are being ignored by the company. The leaders asked the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs for assistance and to advocate on their behalf so that their cultural way of life is not destroyed by the proposed \$1.5 billion US mega-mining project.

To date, Barrick Gold Corp has agreed to provide \$60 million US over the life span of the mine (20 years) to farmers and industry in the valley for irrigation (as this is a desert like region). It has further pledged another \$10 million US for community based projects but has not provided anything directly to the Diaquita People to protect their communities from what they feel is cultural genocide.

The project it self will see the removal of several glaciers off the side of an Andean mountain in order for the company to access the nearly 15 million ounces of gold worth \$ 8.2 to 8.4 billion US (based on a gold price of \$550-555.00 US per ounce). The mentioned amount does not include the millions of dollars that will be made from the mining of the very rich silver and copper deposits also located at the site.

From a development perspective, this Canadian mega-mining project will create 5500 jobs during construction of the mine and another 1500 to mine the deposits over a 20 year period. History demonstrates that these types of mining projects in Chile do not benefit the Indigenous Peoples. The project has experienced mounting pressure from Chilean environmental groups and has witnessed thousands of people protesting in front of Barrick's offices in Santiago. As well the intensity and public attention towards this project has put considerable pressure on Canada's reputation in the Pascua Lama region and throughout Chile.

In Closing, the Diaguita People are very much opposed to the Pascua Lama mining project as they are concerned about the effects this project will have on the environment, the impact on their cultural way of life, as well as the social fabric of their communities. As one leader informed our delegation, he said this project as it stands today, ***"it is nothing more than cultural genocide of the Diaguita People and if Barrick Gold is allowed to continue the project in its present form, the Diaquita will become extinct"....***

As result of our meetings with the Diaguita People, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs has signed the following accord:

Whereas the leaders of the Diaguita Huascoaltino's community, Chile and the leaders of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Canada, due to the political, historical, cultural and social issues they share and considering that:

- *Our peoples are the original peoples of the Americas and share unique cultures as First Peoples that respects the environment which are based on historical and traditional teachings of our people;*
- *Our peoples within their traditional territories have long been the "Sons and daughters of Mother Earth" and shall work together to engage and enhance the economic and community development of our communities in culturally appropriate and sustainable manner;*
- *Our peoples recognize the need to be a part of the main stream economy and in order to do so we will work together to develop partnerships that will improve the quality of life of our people.*
- *Both peoples have kept their community values, their respect for tradition, and recognition of traditional authorities.*

With the purpose of developing the following tasks:

- *Recover control over our traditional lands (in many cases stolen and illegitimately taken by the Status, companies or outsiders);*
- *Strengthen and promote community values and local capacities as instruments for peace and promotion of their own culture;*
- *Enhance knowledge and conservation of their natural heritage;*
- *Develop and promote their culture;*
- *Work towards building sustainable economies and communities through the development of mutually beneficial long-term partnerships with other Indigenous governments, non-Indigenous governments, industry, and non-government organizations;*
- *Promote community level sustainable economic development based on traditional and community based knowledge of the natural environment;*
- *Enhance local leadership to develop culture and community values, specially amongst women and youth;*
- *Protect traditional knowledge to ensure it will be kept in community hands ensuring respect to community interest in biodiversity and natural heritage;*
- *Promote cross-cultural exchanges of Indigenous and First Nations people, ideas, knowledge, and culture of Indigenous and First Nations peoples.*

These tasks will be addressed in a collaborative manner, and shall be based on respect, understanding and solidarity. These tasks will be made into reality through the delivery of joint initiatives and implementation of these initiatives between our two peoples. This may include (but is not solely limited too) community development, fund raising, partnerships, institutional support, political support, technical and professional support, (nationally and internationally), interchange in cultural exchange, academic, technical and community matters, among others.

It is stated here that investor's initiatives are being deployed in Diaguitas traditional territories, that threaten Huascoalinos's Diaguita people with losing their land and natural resources and also alter dramatically their way of life and culture. This situation demands support and solidarity from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to Diaguita People, which will be effective through joint activities developed under the terms of this accord.

***The above agreement was signed on Thursday, January 19, 2006, in Santiago, Chile by Grand Chief Evans and the Diaguita Leadership....*

Chilean Tour Photo Album January 12 – 19, 2006



*Manitoba Chiefs with Ambassador Giroux
at the Embassy Office*



*Grand Chief meeting with the
Diaguita Leadership in Vina del Mar*



*Project area where the traditional
medicine facility is being built.*



*Political Accord signing at the Chiefs General Council
Administrative and Health Care offices. Photo includes:
Grand Chief Evans, Grand Chief Carlos Lincoman,
Chief Kent and other leaders, Elders and technical staff.*



*Signing of the Diaguita and Assembly of Manitoba
Chiefs Political Accord. Photo includes: Grand Chief
Evans, Chief Kent, several Diaguita leaders and
Observatorio technical staff.*



*First Nations & Indigenous Leaders after
the signing of the Political Accord in Chiloe, Chile.*



Grand Chief Evans and Chief Kent meeting with several Mapuche leaders at the Mapuche Cultural Centre in Temuco.