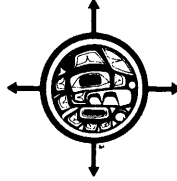


OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 19, 2004**

Prime Minister's 'Aboriginal Summit' Just More Pre-Electioneering Aboriginal Delegate Selection Heavily Vetted and Messages Controlled

(Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver, April 19, 2004) The Assembly of First Nations failed to consult on the selection of participants to the 'Canada-Aboriginal Summit' nor did they ask what message should be brought forward to the Prime Minister, his Cabinet Ministers and other federal government representatives.

Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs responded today "Our organization was not consulted about who should attend and what should be said to the federal government representatives by the AFN delegation at the hastily called 'Summit'. A one day scripted event with hand picked participants isn't representative of First Nations."

Chief Phillip commented further "From what I've seen from the Prime Minister and our National Chief, I have to say that I am personally not satisfied nor the least bit impressed. Our people deserve more specifics about the Martin government's plans for First Nations. While the Prime Minister was holding his 'Summit' his government continues to press forward with Bill C-23, legislation that was rejected by a majority of First Nations across Canada time and time again. As well, the Prime Minister continues with his unilateral program spending review. First Nations want concrete changes to the federal governments' 1995 Aboriginal Self-Government policy and their Comprehensive Land Claims policy. We didn't hear the Prime Minister say he was changing those immoral and illegal policies to at least reflect the current case-law. What the Prime Minister seemed to suggest was that his government is going to ignore the direction set out by recent Supreme Court of Canada in the *Delgamuukw* and *Haida* cases, because the 'courts do not define relationships-people do'. Paul Martin is going to continue to keep the B.C. Treaty process alive using outdated land claims policy which our members have categorically rejected at its outset."

Chief Stewart Phillip added, "National Chief Fontaine said today that AFN wants to get rid of the *Indian Act* and the Department of Indian Affairs. In principle we agree with his statement that as a goal, but unless the Assembly of First Nations starts acting properly and involving our organization and our membership in the process before they make proposals or 'plans' to the federal government we will not allow the AFN to say they speak for us in federal 'Summits' or otherwise."

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