

Preliminary Report on Results from Third Indigenous National Congress

"Natural Resources are not merchandise to be bought and sold!"

Nurío, Michoacán (México) March 2, 3 and 4, 2001

From Narco News correspondents and combined wire reports of Notimex and AP:

The Third Indigenous National Congress was attended 3,300 indigenous delegates officially sent by their communities, representing 42 of the 56 ethnic groups in México. - At the closing session on Sunday afternoon, the assembly demanded the recognition of indigenous rights in the Mexican constitution, in the form written by the Cocopa (Concord and Peace Commission), announcing, "We will not resign from being who we are and we will continue defending our autonomy."

In a clear reference to President Vicente Fox's "Plan Panam'e'l-Puebla," and the proposed mega-project of a superhighway on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Oaxaca and Veracruz, the final document of the CNI declared that México's "natural resources are not merchandise to be bought and sold, because we won't accept the destruction of our territories by the impositions of projects and mega-projects that state and federal governments try to impose on the indigenous regions of the country." The delegates assembled called for the demilitarization of the country and the release of all indigenous political prisoners.

To the 6,000 observers and 600 special invitees present for the three day Congress, the assembly called upon national and international Civil Society to demonstrate support for the recognition of indigenous rights and to accompany the Zapatista Caravan to México City as it goes to dialogue with the federal Congress.

Indigenous communities throughout México will form "autonomous municipalities" similar to the 38 such entities formed in Chiapas by the Zapatistas, and will declare a National Day of Indigenous Rights.

The congress members will form a human chain around the San Lázaro legislative palace on Monday, March 12th, and asked all Civil Society to join the giant demonstration on Sunday, March 11th on the Zócalo in México City with the Zapatista delegates.

A special commission of the Indigenous National Congress will accompany the Zapatistas for the duration of their journey to México City. - The Congress also called on the Fox administration to comply with the three signals necessary for dialogue: The withdraw of federal army troops from three more bases in Chiapas; the release of 53 more Zapatista political prisoners; and the implementation of the San Andrés Accords signed by the government in 1996.

The Indigenous National Congress will become a permanent body of representation of all the

indigenous peoples of México.

The Congress repudiated Televisa and TV Azteca" for their lack of respect for indigenous communities" committed through the "Concert for Peace" yesterday in México City.

The Congress demanded that the mass media publishes all the information related to the activities of CNI and EZLN (to which Narco News cheerfully complies with this and other reports). - The indigenous representatives concluded that they will continue defending their autonomy, "and in defending it, we will also defend all of those who, like us, want to live differently with dignity."

A workshop led by three of the women Zapatista comandantas, Mixe delegate Cándida Jiménez (who spoke at the mass rally in Puebla on February 27th) and Purepecha delegate Enriqueta Calder, and other participants, voted that the Indigenous National Congress, from now on, should be represented always in public by a pair of spokespersons: one woman and one man.

Although 10,000 people gathered for three days with insufficient funds, food or shelter, a table set up by the State Human Rights Commission to receive complaints about any violations or irregularities at the Indigenous National Congress received zero complaints about the event. They did receive three complaints over the government's sentencing of two indigenous fishermen in Michoacán to 20 years apiece in prison for detaining a government inspector who tried to prohibit them from practicing their craft. This was the case denounced by Subcomandante Marcos last Friday, after speaking with the wives of the prisoners.

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