



PRESS RELEASE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

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COLVILLE TRIBES' CHAIRMAN DESCRIBES PRESIDENT'S REMARKS TO NAVAJO CODE TALKERS AS "RACIST AND INSENSITIVE"

(Nespelem, WA)—The Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation today expressed disappointment in President Donald Trump's remarks at a November 27 event honoring World War II Navajo Code Talkers. Trump used the occasion to attack his political opponent, Senator Elizabeth Warren, by referring to her as "Pocahontas."

"Unfortunately we have become accustomed to the President's divisive and disrespectful speech," Colville Chairman Dr. Michael E. Marchand said. "But Mr. Trump's remarks, particularly at this White House meeting and in the presence of these Native American war heroes, cannot go unchallenged."

The Code Talkers are well known for their enormous contribution to the US war effort in the Pacific. They were recruited in the early 1940s by the Marines to develop a code based upon their Navajo language; this was used to transmit critical secret messages to the Pacific Theater. For decades it remained unbroken.

"It is not news that Native Americans have been offended by the use of 'Pocahontas'—the name of an historic Indian woman—to deride Senator Warren," Marchand said. "It was particularly tactless and insulting at the Code Talker ceremony. These remarks were both inappropriate and beneath the dignity of the office he holds."

"We hope the President will stop using this insensitive and racist tactic," Marchand said. "The name of a Native woman, significant in history, should never be used as a political punch line,"

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About the Colville Tribes:

Today, more than 9,520 descendants of 12 aboriginal tribes of Indians are enrolled in the Confederated Tribes of the Colville. The tribes, commonly known by English and French names, are: the Colville, the Nespelem, the San Poil, the Lake, the Palus, the Wenatchi (Wenatchee), the Chelan, the Entiat, the Methow, the southern Okanogan, the Moses Columbia and the Nez Perce of Chief Joseph's Bands.