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For Resource Industries, Aboriginal Consultation is and will remain one of the most difficult issues to factor out uncertainty. As the Alberta Government currently reworks its Aboriginal Consultation Guidelines, the divide between the three involved party's – Aboriginals, Alberta Government, and Industry – is great. Each party has a solution in mind but in general it is not how the other two see things. Starting with cultural differences and adding in 400 years of both mismanagement and misunderstanding we still remain a long way for final resolution.

Idle No More is an ongoing protest movement originating among the Aboriginal peoples in Canada comprising the First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples and their non-Aboriginal supporters in Canada, and to a lesser extent, internationally. It has consisted of a number of political actions worldwide, inspired in part by the liquid (fish broth) diet hunger strike of Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence and further coordinated via social media. A reaction to alleged legislative abuses of indigenous treaty rights by the current federal government, the movement takes particular issue with the recent omnibus bill Bill C-45

The founders of Idle No More outlined the vision and goals of the movement in a January 10, 2013 press release as follows:

The vision revolves around Indigenous Ways of Knowing rooted in Indigenous Sovereignty to protect water, air, land and all creation for future generations.

The Conservative government bills beginning with Bill C-45 threaten Treaties and this Indigenous Vision of Sovereignty.

The movement promotes environmental protection and indigenous sovereignty. It plans to accomplish these goals by: (A) Implementing leadership structure and councils (Such as the Council of Women) (B) Taking training in coordinating rallies, media, messaging and safety issues as well as in identifying provocateurs, misinformation skills, and propaganda. (C) Placing key spokespeople and connecting with experienced experts in different areas; i.e. treaty research, indigenous rights and governance, environmental activism, writers, international spokesperson, national etc. (D) Creating chapters across Turtle Island under the umbrella of the main INM. (E) Requesting regular meetings with First Nations leadership to have ongoing discussions regarding third party agreements between the Government of Canada and industry corporations

To date the movement has been particularly focused on:

(A) The education and the revitalization of indigenous peoples through awareness and empowerment.

(B) Encouraging knowledge sharing about indigenous sovereignty and environmental protections.[10]

The press release also notes that "As a grassroots movement, clearly no political organization speaks for Idle No More".

Idle No More's vision has been linked by some commentators in the press with longstanding leftist political theories of indigenism. During the protests of late 2012 and

early 2013, the theoretical framework of Idle No More has been frequently articulated in the Canadian press by Pamela Palmater. Palmater has denounced what she perceives as the federal government's "assimilationist agenda". It has been suggested by others that the definition of "nation" is itself problematic. Sylvia McAdam, a co-founder of the movement, has said that she does not condone the rail or road blockade tactics that some demonstrators have used, and has spoken in support of peaceful protest "within the legal boundaries".

There will always be extremists on either side of the fence. As the movement has broadened with some Aboriginal factions calling to shut Canada down economically through road and rail blockades, the likelihood of a flashpoint or flashpoints increases. Four snippets from history:

The Oka Crisis was a land dispute between a group of Mohawk people and the town of Oka, Quebec, Canada which began on July 11, 1990 and lasted until September 26, 1990. One person died as a result. The dispute was the first well-publicized violent conflict between First Nations and the Canadian government in the late 20th century. The crisis developed from a local dispute between the town of Oka and the Mohawk community of Kanesatake. The town of Oka was developing plans to expand a golf course and residential development onto land which had traditionally been used by the Mohawk. It included pineland and a burial ground, marked by standing tombstones of their ancestors. The Mohawks had filed a land claim for the sacred grove and burial ground near Kanesatake, but their claim had been rejected in 1986. On August 29, at the Mercier Bridge blockade, the Mohawks negotiated an end to their protest with Lieutenant-Colonel Robin Gagnon, the 'Van Doo' commander responsible for monitoring the blockades along the south shore of the St. Lawrence River west of Montreal. This action further resulted in the resolution of the original siege on the Kahnawake reserve. Mohawks at Oka, however, felt betrayed at the loss of their most effective bargaining chip in the Mercier Bridge: once traffic began flowing again, the Quebec government rejected further negotiations pursuant to their original dispute concerning the Oka golf course expansion. September 25 witnessed the final engagement of the crisis: a Mohawk warrior walked around the perimeter of the blockade area with a long stick, setting off flares that had been originally installed by the Canadian Forces to alert them to individuals fleeing the area. The army turned a water hose on this man, but it lacked enough pressure to disperse the crowd surrounding him. This crowd taunted the soldiers and began throwing water balloons at them, but the incident did not escalate further. The following day the Mohawks laid down their arms, dismantled their guns and threw them in a fire, ceremonially burning tobacco and returning to the reserve. Many, however, were detained by the Canadian Forces and arrested by the SQ. The Oka Crisis lasted 78 days, and gunfire early in the crisis killed SQ Corporal Marcel Lemay. The golf course expansion which had originally triggered the crisis was cancelled by the mayor of Oka. The Oka Crisis galvanized, throughout Canada, a subsequent process of developing an First Nations Policing Policy to try to prevent future such events.

The Gustafsen Lake Standoff was a confrontation between the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the self-proclaimed Ts'peten Defenders in the interior of British Columbia, Canada, at Gustafsen Lake. The standoff began on August 18, 1995, and ended on September 17, 1995. The RCMP operation would end up being the most costly of its kind in Canadian history having involved 400 police officers and support from the

Canadian Military (under Operation Wallaby). The predominantly indigenous occupiers believed that the privately owned ranch land on which they stood was both sacred space and part of a larger tract of unceded Shuswap territory. Fourteen indigenous and four non-native people were charged following the siege, fifteen of whom were found guilty and sentenced to jail terms ranging from six months to eight years. The leader of the occupation, William "Wolverine" Jones Ignace, was found guilty of mischief to property, mischief causing danger to life, possession of firearms and explosives, discharging a firearm at police, and using a firearm to assault police officers. Three of the defendants appealed the verdicts on the grounds that the Canadian courts have no jurisdiction over the lands where the Gustafsen Lake standoff took place, which they claimed remain unceded indigenous land. The Supreme Court of British Columbia refused to hear the appeal.

The Ipperwash Crisis was an Indigenous land dispute that took place in Ipperwash Provincial Park, Ontario in 1995. Several members of the Stoney Point Ojibway band occupied the park in order to assert their claim to nearby land which had been expropriated from them during World War II. During a violent confrontation, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) killed unarmed protester Dudley George. On December 20, 2007, the Ontario Provincial government announced its intention to return the 56-hectare Ipperwash Provincial Park to its original owners, the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation. The decision did not take immediate effect, as the land will be "co-managed" by the Province and the Chippewas, with consultation from the surrounding community, for the time being. According to Aboriginal Affairs Minister Michael Bryant, the land will be fully returned over an unspecified period of time, until the Chippewas have full control. On Thursday 28 May 2009, Ontario Aboriginal Affairs Minister Brad Duguid formally signed over control of Ipperwash Park to the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation.

The Burnt Church Crisis was a conflict in Canada between the Mi'kmaq people of the Burnt Church First Nation and non-Aboriginal fisheries in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. As Indigenous people, Mi'kmaq claim the right to catch and sell lobster out of season. The non-Aboriginals claim that if this is allowed lobster stocks (an important source of income) could be depleted. On September 17, 1999, a Supreme Court of Canada ruling (*R. v. Marshall*) acknowledged that Treaty of 1752 and the Treaty of 1760-1761 held that a Mi'kmaq man, Donald Marshall, Jr., had the legal right to fish for eels out of season. The Supreme Court emphasized the Indigenous people's right to establish a 'moderate livelihood', in modern day standards, through trade and the use of resources to obtain trade items. The Burnt Church First Nation interpreted the judgment as meaning that they could catch lobster out of season and began to put out traps. When the Marshall ruling came down in 1999 and the Native people decided to exercise their right to fish for a 'moderate livelihood', the government was not prepared to deal with rights guaranteed in the Court's decision. The government started a program of buying back licenses from non-Native fishermen to give them to Native people. Angry non-Aboriginals damaged and destroyed thousands of Mi'kmaq lobster traps in the weeks to come. On October 3, 1999, approximately 150 fishing boats headed out into Miramichi Bay to protest against the Mi'kmaq trappers who were fishing lobster out of season. Once the boats returned, shouting matches between non-native and Mi'kmaq fisherman begin, after hundreds of native traps were destroyed. Local Mi'kmaq retaliated and conflicts ensued in the following nights, with both parties suffering injuries and damaged property. In April

2002, a Federal report on the crisis suggested a number of police charges to be dropped and that fishermen should be compensated for damaged traps and boats. It also recommended, however, that First Nations fishermen should be allowed to fish only in season and that they should attain fishing licenses like non-aboriginal fishermen. The crisis concluded when an Agreement in Principle was signed with the Burnt Church community that allowed them the right to fish for subsistence purposes while it denied them the right to catch and sell the lobster.

Idle No More has not gained empathy from the general public and is unlikely to do so when it affects the other side's economic well-being. It does however represent a broader based approach that definitely will gain the attention of various Governments both Federal and Provincial should it be able to sustain itself.

From the Thursday Files

No man is good enough to govern another man without the other's consent.
Abraham Lincoln