

Exchange Mail

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FROM Gobush, Matthew N. (VP)
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SUBJECT U'wa Guidance [UNCLASSIFIED]
TO Orfini, Michael H. (VP)

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TEXT_BODY

Mike - Can you please update this guidance? An answer to the catch all question "What has the Vice President done to resolve this issue?" should cover most of our needs. Thanks.

TRANSLATED_ATTACHMENT

Uwa PG 4-19-00.doc
Guidance on U'wa
January 24, 2000

Background: In late September of 1999, Occidental Petroleum won approval to begin drilling for oil in the so-called Samore block of the northeastern Colombian Amazon region after a seven-year legal dispute over indigenous rights.

The U'wa are adamantly opposed to the drilling and warn that the project will lead to an increase in violence as seen in other oil regions of Colombia. This dispute included threats of mass suicide from the U'wa indian community in the area. In August, as part of a concession to the tribe, the Colombian government enlarged the area of the official U'wa reserve from 40,000 hectares to 543,000 hectares. In November, some 200 U'wa indians occupied the test drill site, which lies just outside the government-recognized Indian reservation, but still within an area that the U'wa claim as traditional tribal homeland. Recently, the Colombian military have entered the area to secure the site.

Groups like the Sierra Club, Rainforest Action Network and Amazon Watch have campaigned actively on this issue for several years and disrupted a

recent
Occidental shareholder meeting to voice opposition to proceeding
with the
project. Now, they are turning their guns on the Vice President,
essentially
alleging that the Vice President - because he is "inextricably linked" to

Occidental - is willing to sell out the environmental and indigenous
rights
threatened by Oxy, in order to advance his financial and political
ambitions.

Activists have already begun protesting at some Gore events, and
Financial Times.
Com and Salon Magazine have both run recent pieces articulating the
NGO view on
this.

What is the Vice President's opinion of Occidental's efforts to drill in
the
traditional territory of the U'wa Indians, in spite of the damage to the
environment and indigenous rights, and the oil-related violence it
would trigger?

The Vice President is a longtime advocate of rainforest conservation,
indigenous
rights, and careful consideration of environmental impact of natural
resource
development - in the United States and abroad.

While he has not been involved in the discussions between the U'wa
Tribe, the
Government of Colombia and Occidental Petroleum, he hopes all
sides in Colombia
continue to address questions of the environment and indigenous
rights and try to
settle them to the satisfaction of all parties.

But these issues have not been addressed, and Oxy is preparing to
begin drilling
its exploratory well.

The Vice President has not been involved in discussions on this issue,
so he
doesn't know the particulars. But Administration and White House
officials are
reaching out to groups concerned about this to gather more
information.

What about the charges that the Vice President is selling out his interests in the environment and indigenous rights because he is too closely tied to Occidental?

In October, the Vice President announced that if he is elected President, he will take the most sweeping steps in history to protect our oceans and coastal waters from offshore drilling. This means a blanket prohibition on any new oil leasing off the coasts of California and Florida. It also means working to fight any new drilling off both Florida and California, even in areas already leased for drilling.

This clearly elevates environmental interests over oil interests, including Occidental's. And that explodes the myth that he somehow takes special care of Occidental to advance his personal financial or political interests.

Well, why doesn't the Vice President call Occidental and tell them to end this project?

As I said, the Vice President has not been involved in discussions on this issue. It would be premature to demand action without knowing all the particulars.

Will the Vice President call on Occidental to suspend plans for drilling until he has a chance to review the situation?

His first step has to be to learn more about the situation.

Will the Vice President sell his Occidental stock?

As I said, the Vice President's first step has to be to learn more about the situation.

