



PEACE & JUSTICE COMMISSION

ACTION CALENDAR

October 25, 2011

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Peace and Justice Commission  
Submitted By: Eric Brenman, Secretary, Peace and Justice Commission  
Subject: Honor the Life and Memory of the Chiricahua Apache Leader Geronimo

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution joining with the nation in honoring the life of Goyathlay, his extraordinary bravery, and his commitment to the defense of his homeland, his people, and Apache ways of life; consider the auto-biography of Goyathlay an historic document of critical significance which American schools should include in their curriculums; send a letter to President Barack Obama calling on him to issue a formal apology to the Chiricahua Apache people and to the indigenous peoples of these lands of the United States for the misuse of the name Geronimo in the military operation that killed the terrorist Osama bin Laden; and call on President Barack Obama to direct the nation to cease using the title Operation Geronimo and instead use the title Operation bin Laden.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

At its regular meeting on June 6, 2011, the Peace and Justice Commission adopted the following recommendation to the Berkeley City Council and Berkeley Unified School Board:

Adopt a Resolution joining with the nation in honoring the life of Goyathlay, his extraordinary bravery, and his commitment to the defense of his homeland, his people, and Apache ways of life; consider the auto-biography of Goyathlay an historic document of critical significance which American schools should include in their curriculums; call on President Barack Obama to issue a formal apology to the Chiricahua Apache people and to the indigenous peoples of these lands of the United States for the misuse of the name Geronimo in the military operation that killed the terrorist Osama bin Laden; and send a letter to President Barack Obama calling on him to direct the nation to cease using the title Operation Geronimo and instead use the title Operation bin Laden.

M/S/C: (Kenin/Lee)

Ayes: Abdul-Khabir; Bohn; Deger(*temporary appointee*); Kenin; Lee (*temporary appointee*); Lippman; Litman; Maran; Meola; Rueda; Sherman

Noes: None

Abstain: Nicely (*Basis for abstention: "The President is limited in the scope of power."*)

Rabkin: (*Basis for abstention: "Afraid Resolution easily caricatured by those who don't read it."*)

Siegel: (*Basis for abstention: "Resolution will not be well-handled by the media or appropriate for Council."*)

Absent: Masri (excused); Mungovan

#### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Peace and Justice Commission, consistent with its mandate (B.M.C. Section 3.68) to promote peace and justice, locally, nationally and internationally, recommends Council approval of this recommendation.

#### ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

#### CITY MANAGER

The City Manager takes no position on the contents of the Peace and Justice Commission's report or recommendation.

#### CONTACT PERSON

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#### Attachments:

- 1) Resolution
- 2) Background Links and Reference Materials

RESOLUTION NO.       –N.S.

HONOR THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF THE CHIRICAHUA APACHE LEADER  
GERONIMO

WHEREAS, Goyathlay or Goyaale, called Geronimo by the soldiers against whom he fought, was born in June 1829 to the Bedonkohe band of the Apache people in No-Doyohn Canyon on the Gila River, which was then part of Mexico; and

WHEREAS, in 1858, Mexican soldiers attacked the Bedonkohe people within the current borders of Mexico, setting in motion a war between that nation and the Apache that would last for three decades; and

WHEREAS, Goyathlay, a spiritual and intellectual leader, became recognized as a great military leader by his people because of his courage, determination, and skill; and

WHEREAS, Goyathlay led his people in a war of self-defense as their homeland was invaded by the citizens and armies first of Mexico, and then of the United States; and

WHEREAS, that homeland was healthy, thriving, and beautiful with ample running water, extensive grasslands, and ancient forests and was a place beloved and revered by the Apache people, who had lived there for countless generations; and

WHEREAS, Goyathlay's band, along with other Apache peoples, were forcibly removed by the United States Army, interned at San Carlos, Arizona, subjugated, and deprived of their rights as a free people, including the right to practice their traditional spiritual beliefs and maintain long-standing political and social structures; and

WHEREAS, Goyathlay led fewer than 150 men, women, and children out of captivity and for several years evaded fighting forces consisting of one-quarter of the standing United States Army, as well as thousands of Mexican soldiers; and

WHEREAS, upon surrendering to United States forces, Goyathlay and his band were promised a return to their homeland but were instead interned in military prisons in Florida and Alabama, far from their homeland; and

WHEREAS, Goyathlay, promised respect as a prisoner of war, was put to hard labor for eight years; and

WHEREAS, Goyathlay and other Apache prisoners of war were removed to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in 1894; and

WHEREAS, after his death on February 17, 1909, Goyathlay was not granted the promised return to his homeland but instead was buried in the military cemetery at Fort Sill; and

WHEREAS, Goyathlay's byname, 'Geronimo', became a war cry uttered by paratroopers fighting against the totalitarian enemies of the United States during World War II, a name used with respect and honor for a great warrior and leader; and

WHEREAS, to this day, the Apache people continue to honor and hold sacred what Goyathlay represented to a people separated and destroyed by historic and disruptive United States governmental policies of the past; and

WHEREAS, there still exists a need for spiritual healing among Apache people, stemming from the captivity and mistreatment of their ancestors under past policies of the United States Government, that can commence by honoring the memory of Goyathlay and his valiant efforts to preserve traditional Apache ways of life and the health of Ni'godza'n, the Earth; and

WHEREAS, on February 23, 2010, the US House of Representatives passed Resolution 132 to: 1) honor the life of Goyathlay, his extraordinary bravery, and his commitment to the defense of his homeland, his people, and Apache ways of life; and 2) recognize the 100 anniversary of the death of Goyathlay as a time of reflection of his deeds on behalf of his people; and

WHEREAS, during Goyathlay's younger years, the 150,000 Californian natives that survived the Spanish/Mexican experience were about 90% eradicated by the American settlers, with several thousand killed during a twenty-year period of military operations, while the natives killed less than 300 invaders from 1848-1870; and

WHEREAS, Goyathlay published his autobiography, dictated to S. M. Barrett in 1905 and 1906, with permission of President Theodore Roosevelt; and

WHEREAS, Goyathlay participated on horseback in the inaugural Presidential Parade in 1906 during the time he was a political prisoner; and

WHEREAS, the Chiricahua Apache people today are living in reservations in Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas, and Florida, as well as in many other places, and many Chiricahua Apache people today wish to return to their homelands; and

WHEREAS, the direct descendants of Goyathlay, plus Native American individuals, tribes, organizations and institutions have objected to the US military's use of the name Geronimo in the military operation that killed Osama bin Laden; and

WHEREAS, the military operation that killed Osama bin Laden continues to be referred to as Operation Geronimo in the news media and in other discussions; and

WHEREAS, the use of the name Geronimo for the country's most wanted terrorist is offensive particularly to Native Americans and negatively impacts the identity and social position of Native American youth; and

WHEREAS, unjust federal policies continue to oppress Native American communities to this day.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City of Berkeley join with the nation in honoring the life of Goyathlay, his extraordinary bravery, and his commitment to the defense of his homeland, his people, and Apache ways of life; consider the autobiography of Goyathlay an historic document of critical significance which American schools should include in their curriculums; send a letter to President Barack Obama calling on the United States to issue a formal apology to the Chiricahua Apache people and to the indigenous peoples of these lands of the United States for the misuse of the name Geronimo in the military operation that killed the terrorist Osama bin Laden; and call on President Barack Obama to direct the nation to cease using the title Operation Geronimo and instead use the title Operation bin Laden. A record signature copy of said Resolution to be on file in the Office of the City Clerk.

Background links and reference materials:

Text of H. Res. 132 [111th]: Honoring the life and memory of the Chiricahua Apache leader Goyathlay or Goyaale, also known as Geronimo; February 23, 2009:

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=hr111-132>

Hearing video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9bMkm6SbKo>

Hearing transcript: <http://www.sancarlosapache.org/HOUSERES132.html>

San Carlos Apache Tribe letter to Obama:

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2011/05/san-carlos-apache-tribe-seeks-apology-from-president-obama/>

Collection of related articles and statements:

<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2011/05/fail-codename-for-osama-bin-laden.html>

“Indian Massacre”, Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian\\_massacre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_massacre)

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