

According to Anthropologist:

Relocation could lead to illness and death

PASADENA, Calif. — A leading anthropologist at the California Institute of Technology has written President Carter a letter warning that relocation of some 6,000 Navajo people from their ancestral homelands will seriously increase the rates of illness and death among Navajo adults, and "will be especially traumatic for Navajo women of all ages."

In a personal letter of protest to President Carter, Dr. Thayer Scudder, a world-renowned population relocation expert explained, "research that I directed among relocated Navajo Indians in late 1978 and early 1979 indicated that relocation will be especially traumatic among Navajo women of all ages. It is through them that the land . . . is passed on to the children. If the land is taken away . . . many women will suffer terribly because they believe that their children will scatter off the reservation and will lose their Navajo identity."

Scudder continued, "while I expected elderly Navajo women

to be stressed by compulsory relocation, frankly, I did not expect the analysis of our data to indicate that most adult women of all ages can be expected to be seriously stressed, irrespective of education and employment status."

Despite the appeal, however, President Carter signed the Navajo and Hopi Indians Relocation Act of 1980 into law on July 8, 1980.

Scudder added, "I am further deeply disturbed that the solution to this land dispute between American Indians requires the compulsory relocation of over 5,800 people while the resolution of land disputes between American Indians and Anglo-Americans (as recently carried out in New England) does not require compulsory relocation of Anglos.

"I believe that we are following a double standard here which is reprehensible."

Scudder declared that he believed the relocation legislation must be repealed during the next congress and "replaced with a
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● *Navajos*

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major development program for the Hopi people and the Navajo residents of the former Joint Use Area."

Scudder told Carter, "at the very least, I urge you to appoint a distinguished panel, drawing members of the National Academy of Sciences (including the National Institute of Medicine) to carry out an independent appraisal of the expected impact of relocation on the Navajo people involved.

"To date, too much assessment has been in an adversary setting; (and) a careful assessment of human costs by the National Academy of Sciences would help clear the air and hopefully lay the basis for a more equitable solution," Scudder noted.

He concluded: "Mr. President I believe that if we continue this compulsory relocation, it will prove embarrassing to the United States, especially granted your own stand on human rights."