

Indian Leaders meet with Iranian

(Washington, D.C.) – The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), meeting in Executive Council sessions here last week heard Sassan Ardalan, a representative of the Iranian government state that, contrary to some reports, the hostages being held by militant Iranian students in Teheran are being treated well. Frederick Kupke, a member of the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma, is among the hostages.

Sassan Ardalan was invited by NCAI to speak to the group following passage of a resolution on January 22 expressing deep concern over the present crisis in Iran. The organization has offered to act as a mediator/communicator between the United States and the Iranian government.

Edward Driving Hawk, President of NCAI, said that the matter was taken up by the organization because of the activity and "anti-American" statements being made by John Thomas, a representative of the American Indian Treaty Council. He noted such statements were causing anger among both Indians and non-Indians.

Thomas' organization is described as one which has no general Indian constituency by the NCAI. NCAI has expressed concern that a popular impression is that his views are representative of American Indians.

"In spite of over 200 years of problems between Indians and the government of this country," Driving Hawk said, "Indian people are very patriotic. Our young men have volun-

tarily served in the armed forces through all its wars. History books will document that it was because of Indian support that the Americans won the Revolutionary War. Aside from that, this is our only country and at a time like this, we stand with others in its support."

The resolution was presented to Sassan Ardalan who advised that it would be transmitted to the Iranian government but that any response would depend upon the election and how soon normal business activity would resume.

The NCAI is the largest and most representative Indian organization in the United States. Its membership of approximately 5,000 includes over half of the nation's Indian tribal governments.