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THE FACT IS YOU CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE ALASKA NATIVE LAND RIGHTS WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING US AS A PEOPLE. A TRULY COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ALASKA NATIVE LAND RIGHTS MUST NECESSARILY ENCOMPASS CONCEPTS OF INDIAN LAW AND AN APPRECIATION OF THE BROAD SWEEP AND DEVELOPMENT OF PERTINENT NATIONAL POLICY; A RESPECT FOR THE HERITAGE OF THE PEOPLE WHO ASSERT THESE RIGHTS; AN AWARENESS OF THE POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE STATE OF ALASKA AND, FINALLY, THE NATIONAL CONSCIENCE WHICH MUST NOW RESPOND TO THE EXPLICIT CONGRESSIONAL GUARANTEES GIVEN TO THE ALASKA NATIVES 85 LONG YEARS AGO.

THE POLICY OF HONORING TRIBAL OCCUPANCY RIGHTS AND PURCHASING INDIAN LAND ANTEDATED THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES AND WAS FURTHER EVIDENCED IN THE MORE THAN 300 TREATIES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE VARIOUS INDIAN TRIBES. IT IS PERTINENT TO NOTE THAT OVER TWO MILLION SQUARE MILES WERE PURCHASED FROM THE AMERICAN INDIANS. IT IS THIS AREA WHICH PRESENTLY COMPRISES THE BULK OF THE PRESENT PUBLIC DOMAIN LANDS. THE UNITED STATES PAID FRANCE FIFTEEN MILLION DOLLARS FOR THE ACQUISITION OF POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE HISTORIC LOUISIANA PURCHASE AREA. OVER 300 MILLION MORE DOLLARS WAS PAID TO THE INDIAN OWNERS OF THE LAND FOR THE EXTINGUISHMENT OF THEIR TITLE RIGHTS. SOMEDAY, ALL HISTORY BOOKS WILL ACCURATELY CHRONICLE THE ROLE OF OUR INDIAN AND NATIVE PEOPLES RELATIVE TO THE GROWTH OF OUR COUNTRY.

THUS, AS A MATTER OF NATIONAL POLICY, THE CONGRESS HAS COME TO RECOGNIZE THE JUST PRINCIPLE OF VOLUNTARY PURCHASE AND SALE FOR A NEGOTIATED PRICE IN ITS DEALING WITH THE INDIAN TRIBES. NOR HAVE INDIAN RIGHTS LACKED FOR A LEGAL DEFINITION.