

Although all three proposals deal with the same subjects (the amount of compensation to be paid to the Natives for extinguishment of aboriginal title, the amount of land to be retained by the Natives, and the manner in which the settlement is to be implemented), they differ in material respects. We shall demonstrate in this memorandum that on each of the central issues (compensation, land and administration) the AFN proposal best serves the public interest.

In determining what is an appropriate settlement, the critical factors are not cases, statutes or treaties, although these have some bearing on the matter. If legislation is to solve the problem effectively, the problem must be seen in its total historical, economic and social context. Accordingly, before considering specific proposals, we will look at the Alaska Native lands issue as an aspect of the most persistent problem our nation has faced since its earliest days - - - the relationship between the United States and its aboriginal peoples - - - and we will discuss the unique opportunity which this issue now presents to Congress.

II. The Opportunity Presented to Congress

The legislative resolution of the Alaska Natives lands issue will constitute the last significant chapter in the history of America's confrontation with aboriginal land