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Dear Relatives:

This is a copy of the presentation that our representative in Hawaii, Tony Castanha, gave at a recent conference in Virginia. Please keep this for your files and feel free to distribute this report to others.

I hope you will all join me in congratulating Tony on a job well done!

In the Spirit of Our Ancestors

Peace and Blessings,

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Aloha and Greetings,

The presentation below serves as a summary and update on the movement to revoke the papal bull "Inter Caetera." The address was given at the recent National Conference for Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution (NCPCR) at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. The indigenous people's delegation at the conference, with native representatives from Virginia, Columbia, El Salvador, Tanzania, St. Kitts-Nevis and Boriken, was effective in educating and garnering support for indigenous issues raised among conference delegates. For instance, the issue concerning the halting of the U.S. bombing of Bieke (Vieques) and Makua Valley was addressed numerous times throughout the conference. And at the Saturday plenary session a proposal to do away with "Columbus Day" was announced.

Regarding Inter Caetera, the recent opinion by the head of the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences and our initial response to it was of particular importance. This was the first time such an opinion has ever been rendered at a commission level of the Vatican, so we believe we are on the right track to the resolution of this issue. Inter Caetera is further linked to "globalization" in a contemporary context as explained below.

In addition, it is important to learn that in the "Doctrines of Dispossession" for the upcoming World Conference against Racism (WCAR) in South Africa, the principle of Christian dominion grounded in the papal bulls is used as a historical basis of the conference. Indeed, the issuance of the bull "Romanus Pontifex" of January 8, 1455 granted Portugal exclusive rights to Africa and ushered in an unprecedented era of racism in the modern world. We are appreciative of those who have carried forward the papal bulls issue at the WCAR.

Finally, we'd like to announce the recent formation of the organization "Kosmos Indigena." Kosmos Indigena is an outgrowth of the annual papal bulls burning and delegation sent to the Vatican last October. The group is based in Hawai'i and works in solidarity with other groups pressing for the revocation of Inter Caetera. We recently mapped out a five year plan to move the struggle forward. Kosmos Indigena does not have a membership. As our name implies, "Kosmos" concerns a striving for harmony and spiritual oneness with everything in the universe, and "Indigena" recognizes that we are all ultimately "indigenous." It is just a matter of coming to terms with our "indigenesness." Thus, Kosmos Indigena is inclusive of anyone working for peace and justice on earth and beyond.

[Bullsweb](#)

National Conference on Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution 2001

**10th Biennial Conference
JustPEACE Training Institute & Summit
George Mason University**

Fairfax, Virginia, June 7-10, 2001

**General Plenary Session, June 9, 2001
Address on the Revocation of the Papal Bull "Inter Caetera"**

**(edited, Copyright 2001),
by Tony Castanha**

**Kosmos Indigena
Matsunaga Institute for Peace
United Confederation of Taino People**

Aloha Kakou and Guatiao,

"Aloha" in the Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) language has many many meanings and "Aloha Kakou" as I mean to say to you today is a greeting of friendship or love, just like "Guatiao" in the Carib/Taino language is a traditional indigenous Caribbean way of welcoming or greeting of friendship among peoples and friends. The guatiao was also used as a survival strategy by the principal cacique or chief of the island of Boriken (Puerto Rico), named Agueybana, when he exchanged names with the Spanish colonist Juan Ponce de Leon and became "blood brothers" with him. This assured that the cacical system on the island would continue and not be destroyed as it had apparently been in Quisqueya (today Haiti and the Dominican Republic).

I would like to thank very much the organizers of the NCPCR for bringing me out to speak (particularly Ann Yellott, Sohini Sinha and Christine Francis), and a special thanks to Chief Carmen Baguanamey Colon Delgado for her kind insistence that I make the trip. It was originally a long-shot, but I'm very glad I made it. I would also like to acknowledge and am grateful to Mayan Elder Nichte Xkaltun-Kim for her support and spiritual guidance. Though I am not Kanaka Maoli, or of Native Hawaiian ancestry, I was born and raised in Hawai'i of mostly ancestors who were recruited to work on the sugar plantations during the Kingdom of Hawai'i era, and during the American colonial period which actually continues today.

Since the 1893 United States overthrow and subsequent illegal annexation of the independent Nation of Hawai'i, which violated international law (through the breaking of bi-lateral treaties) and both the U.S. and Hawaiian constitutions, Hawai'i has been a occupied and highly militarized territory, particularly after 1941. While Hawai'i in one sense is a very beautiful place, the island of O'ahu where I am from is one of four of the most militarized spots on earth. This makes us a prime nuclear target in the event of war or mishap. But this is another story, one I'm not here to talk about today, a story I guarantee you won't get watching "Pearl Harbor." However, I do have a few extra copies of what's known as the "Apology Law" (Public Law 103-150), which Bill Clinton and the U.S. Congress signed in 1993 formally apologizing for the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian nation, for anyone who may be interested in reading-up on this history.

I am here to talk with you today as a Carib or Boricua, as a descendant of the peoples who "discovered" a very lost Christobal Colon in 1492. These ancestors are the reason why I am here, to defend them and to help tell their story because they were silenced, but I am not. This is the part of my family who migrated to Hawai'i a century ago after the hurricane San Ciriaco devastated Boriken. My presentation today is broken into three short parts: I'll provide some historical background on the 1493 Inter Caetera papal bull, talk about the movement to revoke it, and discuss its contemporary importance. While I'm speaking, I would like you to consider how a 500 year old decree might relate to today, for as we'll see Inter Caetera has symbolically much to do with what's now known as "globalization."

Last October, I co-coordinated with Daniela Rocco Minerbi of Italy a delegation of nine indigenous human rights activists to Italy and the Vatican seeking the revocation of the papal bull *Inter Caetera*. Papal bulls are edicts or laws that govern the Roman Catholic church. The 1493 bull we are concerned with was the decree handed down by Pope Alexander VI to the king and queen of Spain and subsequently given to Columbus on his second voyage into the Caribbean. *Inter Caetera* granted unlimited rights to Spain in the "New World," and the subsequent 1494 "Treaty of Tordesillas" ("inspired" by *Inter Caetera*) divided the world in half, everything 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde islands went to Spain, everything east went to Portugal (Gottschalk 1927). I'm sure many of you have heard of this decree. Well, it's never been revoked, repealed, repudiated or annulled.

More profoundly, *Inter Caetera* sanctioned Christian dominion and called for the subjugation of non-Christian peoples and their lands (Newcomb 1993). The colonial Spanish claimed "the bulls gave them the right to use just war to convert local populations who had refused to immediately accept Christianity" (Donovan 1992). If you could just imagine for a moment the profundity of the Spaniard there telling the "Indian" IN SPANISH to convert or else. *Inter Caetera* was issued in keeping with the ideology of previous bulls issued since the Crusades and earlier in the 15th century, such as the papal bull "*Romanus Pontifex*" of 1455, in which Pope Nicholas V instructed King Alfonso V of Portugal "to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wherever placed... to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit..." (Davenport 1917). This bull concerned the Portuguese colonization of Africa. Regarding the "Americas," Ward Churchill states that a probable 100 million native peoples were "'eliminated' in the course of Europe's ongoing 'civilization' of the Western hemisphere." This is the Holocaust we do not hear so much about, our Holocaust, the "American Holocaust."

Regarding the 1537 bull "*Sublimis Deus*," said to be "the most important papal pronouncement on the human condition of the Indians" (Gutierrez 1993), some have argued that this papal edict in fact annulled *Inter Caetera*. However, Pope Paul III under pressure from Charles V apparently revoked the penalties contained in the brief "*Pastorale Officium*" that accompanied *Sublimis Deus*. Citing Lewis Hanke, Steve Newcomb points out that Pope Paul III "did revoke the 'letters [or letter] in the form of a brief' which provided for the enforcement of the doctrine" and, thus, "withdrew the ecclesiastical penalties (interdict and excommunication) that would have given the bull legal force." This is apparent for as history unequivocally shows, the promulgation of *Sublimis Deus* was largely a theoretical act since there would be no need to account for those declared to be "extinct," nor for the tens of millions who perished by the end of the 16th century! Therefore, it should be made clear that *Sublimis Deus* did NOT under any circumstances revoke *Inter Caetera* (Boyle 1998, 1999).

The movement to revoke or annul Inter Caetera actually commenced the moment Columbus implemented the "encomienda" system and enslaved the peoples of "Espanola" on his second voyage in 1493. While the genocide and disease there was unfathomable, there was fierce resistance from the beginning. For example, the cacique Guarocuya's (Enriquillo) ten year war against the Spanish "nearly paralyzed" the island at one time resulting "in capitulations that constitute the first treaty between a European power and an American indigenous people" (Barreiro 1993). Indigenous peoples from around the world have been resisting Euro-American imperialism ever since. In 1992, Newcomb and Birgil Killstraight founded the Indigenous Law Institute of Eugene, Oregon and initiated a formal campaign to revoke the bull Inter Caetera. I am grateful to them both and especially to Newcomb for the intense research he has conducted into this issue. At the Parliament of World Religions in 1993, over sixty indigenous delegates drafted a Declaration of Vision. It reads, in part:

We call upon the people of conscience in the Roman Catholic hierarchy to persuade Pope John II to formally revoke the Inter Cetera Bull of May 4, 1493, which will restore our fundamental human rights. That Papal document called for our Nations and Peoples to be subjugated so the Christian Empire and its doctrines would be propagated. The U.S. Supreme Court ruling Johnson v. McIntosh 8 Wheat 543 (in 1823) adopted the same principle of subjugation expressed in the Inter Cetera Bull.

This Papal Bull has been, and continues to be, devastating to our religions, our cultures, and the survival of our populations. In 1997, an annual papal bulls burning initiative commenced in front of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Honolulu on so-called "Columbus Day," or "Discoverer's Day" as it's known in Hawai'i, calling international attention to this issue. In Ka Pae'aina Hawai'i, October 12 is called "Discoverer's Day" to not only honor Columbus but also the "discoverer" of the Hawaiian islands, the British Captain James Cook. So you get two for the price of one there. In February 1999, the United Church of Christ, Hawai'i Conference, passed a resolution that reads: "President Paul Sherry on behalf of the United Church of Christ urges and calls upon people of conscience in the Roman Catholic hierarchy and in other organized religions to persuade Pope John Paul II to revoke the Papal Bulls Dum Diversas of 1452 and Inter Caetera of 1493 by the year 2,000." At the May 1999 Hague Appeal for Peace (HAP), both Newcomb and myself directly addressed and called for the revocation of Inter Caetera on both "Interfaith" and "Root Causes of Violence" panel presentations. And on October 12, 1999, an "Appeal to the Vatican and Pope John Paul II" was presented in Honolulu calling upon the Vatican to repeal Inter Caetera during the "Jubilee" Year 2000, when the Catholic church sought forgiveness and atonement for wrongs of the past. The formation of a delegation of indigenous peoples and supporters to go to the Vatican in 2000 was also announced at this time.

Our delegation traveled to Italy last year with a formal request for an audience with the Pope which was endorsed by the Bishop of Honolulu, Francis X. DiLorenzo. We gathered much attention in Italy giving numerous presentations and press

conferences in Torino, Milano and Roma. While our request to meet with the Pope was turned down, we did have an important meeting with Monsignor Giampaolo Crepaldi, Under-Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. He assured us that the issue concerning the revocation of Inter Caetera was being seriously studied at a Pontifical Historical Commission, or a Committee for Historical Sciences, which we assume is a part of the Secretariat of State. We recently received an opinion from the Pontifical Committee for

Historical Sciences and its President, Monsignor Walter Brandmuller, who concluded that the papal bull Inter Caetera is "juridically not valid anymore." If so, then it is our opinion that the Catholic church should publicly revoke or annul it. We continue to assert that this is the very least the Roman Catholic church can do to atone for the probable 100 million indigenous peoples who perished in the name of Christianity and so-called "Discovery."

We further do not consider adequate the "blanket apology" the Pope gave last March to amend for these past actions. Moreover, his Apology was to "God," not to the descendants of the victims of the atrocities committed to which the church is supposedly taking responsibility for. A few questions thus arise: Why is there still resistance to repealing this decree? Is there a link between a system based on Christian dominion 500 years ago and corporate atrocities today? Has the Roman Catholic church really entered the third millennium with a "clear conscience" as they had set out to do during the "Jubilee"? Certainly the ideology of dominion, subjugation and exploitation of lands and peoples has not changed. Modern-day massacres in Guatemala, Chiapas, East Timor, Kurdistan, Rwanda, etc., and the many subtle genocide's of indigenous and "third world" peoples, such as the continual relocation of the Dine'h (Navajo) of Northeastern Arizona onto toxic radioactive lands and the continued use of "blood quantum" measurements in determining native identity, are clear indicators that racism and cultural violence are still strikingly prevalent. The ideology of Christian dominion grounded in the papal bulls forms the basis of what came to be known as the "doctrine of discovery" (Newcomb 1993). "Discovery" ultimately granted exclusive title to lands not under the dominion of Christian nations and rulers, where "the discovery of a new continent was by divine revelation.

America was obviously meant to be occupied by Christians fulfilling their deity's command" (Deloria, Jr. 1974). However, "discovery" is a great lie because one simply cannot discover lands and peoples who had existed for thousands of years before the European coming. This is an impossibility, that is unless one believes in Christian superiority over other beliefs or religions. If one believes in "discovery" today they inevitably support Christian dominion. The lie of discovery forms the basis of "Columbus Day." Thus, if one celebrates "Columbus Day" they inevitably support Christian superiority over other beliefs or religions.

The "doctrine of discovery" came to form the basis of international law or the "Law of Nations," and subsequently U.S. Federal Indian law (Deloria, Jr. 1974). Both the

Johnson v. McIntosh (1823) and Cherokee v. Georgia (1831) decisions were instrumental in the formation of domestic Indian law. In order to skirt around the separation of church and state built into the U.S. Constitution, Chief Justice John Marshall quietly inserted language of "discovery," or Christian dominion, into these decisions (Newcomb 1993). This is how the Cherokee of Georgia ended up in Oklahoma.

By asserting that Native American nations now only had "aboriginal title" to lands or "rights of occupancy," rather than the absolute sovereignty they legally possessed since time immemorial and through subsequent treaty arrangements, the United States through the exercise of plenary power and so-called "just war" was ultimately able to "win the west."

Today, many nation-states look to U.S. domestic policy as a standard in the treatment of their respective indigenous populations. Given that the U.S. track record has been one of a total obliteration of indigenous rights, is it any wonder why other governments of the world continually repress their own people, native and non-native? All of this, of course, is driven, sponsored and sanctioned in the name of multinational corporate interests, the "money god" of today. "Globalization" based on the corporate policies of such organizations as the ADB, WTO, IMF, NAFTA and the World Bank operate under an international system of law based on the same mentality as the "Law of Nations," which was basically an agreement between Christian European nations to "keep the peace" among themselves that allowed for their colonial wars of expansion. Globalization today results in an extreme disparity of wealth among nations, particularly the global divide between North and South which surely helps to account for the 16,000 children who perish DAILY due to malnutrition. For many, the horror continues.

Essentially, Inter Caetera is the cornerstone of an international system today based on the same ideology of dominion, subjugation and exploitation of lands and peoples as ushered into Africa and the Americas in the 15th century. We are not saying that the Catholic church is perpetuating the same atrocities they did 500 years ago, but what we are saying is that the same ideology and mentality of dominion grounded in contemporary law is ROOTED IN THEIR LAWS and this must be acknowledged and addressed.

The revocation of Inter Caetera will definitely announce before the world community that the Vatican no longer supports the principle of subjugation that it promulgated five and a half centuries ago. The Roman Catholic church will be demonstrating its seriousness about respecting the rights and dignity of all peoples. The revocation of Inter Caetera will be an extremely important spiritual and symbolic gesture of peace and healing in creating a culture of and right to peace on earth. Mahalo nui loa.