

Chronological: The Changing Scene in Island Governance, Maui, 1993-08-16

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers
Speeches, Box SP10, Folder 32
<http://hdl.handle.net/10524/63484>

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THE CHANGING SCENE IN ISLAND GOVERNANCE

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AUGUST 16, 1993

MANY MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO, THERE EXISTED ONE HUGE LAND MASS ON THIS PLANET.

THE CONTINENTS OF NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA WERE JOINED TOGETHER WITH AFRICA, EUROPE, ASIA AND AUSTRALIA.

AND ON THIS LARGE LAND MASS, THERE APPEARED SEEDS OF LIFE THAT EVENTUALLY EVOLVED INTO THE LIVING BEINGS OF THIS DAY.

MILLIONS OF YEARS LATER, CONTINENTS DRIFTED APART AND THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT TODAY CAME INTO EXISTENCE.

AND SO, NO ONE CAN REALLY TELL US WHERE THE PEOPLES OF THE PACIFIC CAME FROM.

DID THEY COME FROM THE WESTERN SHORE OF SOUTH AMERICA?

OR DID THEY COME FROM THE EASTERN SHORES OF ASIA AND THE SUBCONTINENT?

WHATEVER IT IS, THEY WERE UNUSUALLY INTELLIGENT AND HARDY PEOPLE WHO TRAVELED LONG DISTANCES ON FOOT AND LATER BY PRIMITIVE BOATS OVER

VAST UNCHARTERED WATERS.

THEY WERE UNDOUBTEDLY THE FIRST OCEAN NAVIGATORS OF THIS PLANET, AND THEY DISCOVERED AND INHABITED THE HUNDREDS OF ISLANDS THAT ARE LOCATED NOW IN THE PACIFIC.

THIS EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY AND MIGRATION VERY LIKELY ENDED WITH THE LAST VOYAGE TO HAWAII FROM SOMEWHERE IN POLYNESIA.

AND SO TODAY, THE DESCENDANTS OF THESE ORIGINAL PEOPLE OF THE PACIFIC LIVE ON HUNDREDS OF ISLANDS IN AN AREA LARGER THAN THE CONTINENTS OF AUSTRALIA, NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA AND AFRICA, PUT TOGETHER -- BUT, THEY HAVE MANY THINGS IN COMMON.

THEY ARE ALL INSULAR PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME TO LOVE, RESPECT, AND LIVE IN PEACE WITH THE OCEAN, THE MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS, AND THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS THAT LIVE ON AND IN THEM.

AMONG ALL OF THE PEOPLES OF THIS PLANET, THEY KNOW MORE ABOUT THE SECRETS OF LIVING WITH NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

THEN WITH THE COMING OF COOK, AND MAGELLAN, AND OTHER EUROPEAN NAVIGATORS, THEY WERE DISCOVERED, POSSESSED AND EXPLOITED.

THIS AGE OF POSSESSION AND EXPLORATION IS NOW COMING TO A CLOSE. ONCE AGAIN, SOVEREIGNTIES HAVE RE-AWAKENED, ARE BEING RE-ESTABLISHED, AND ARE BEGINNING TO FLOURISH.

WE ARE NOW AT THE BEGINNING OF THE AGE OF REVIVAL AND RESTORATION.

HOWEVER, IN THIS WORLD OF SUPER POWERS AND ECONOMIC GIANTS, THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOFT VOICES OF THE ISLAND STATES OF THE PACIFIC MAY BE TOO GENTLE AND TOO WEAK TO STAND UP TO THE WEALTH, POWER, AND MIGHT OF THE GREAT NATIONS.

IF NOTHING IS DONE AT THIS JUNCTURE IN HISTORY, THESE ISLAND STATES AND SOVEREIGNS MAY ONCE AGAIN FIND THEMSELVES BACK IN THE AGE OF POSSESSION.

THE TEMPTATIONS ARE GREAT AND TO RESIST POWER MAY BE DIFFICULT.

HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE PACIFIC CAN CONTINUE THIS MOVEMENT AND EVOLUTION TO GREATER INDEPENDENCE BY JOINING HANDS AND BY SPEAKING IN ONE MIGHTY VOICE.

I SUGGEST THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE PACIFIC SERIOUSLY CONSIDER A CONFEDERATION OF SOVEREIGNTIES.

THERE WAS A TIME, NOT TOO MANY YEARS AGO, WHEN SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN FEASIBLE AND REALISTIC.

HOWEVER, TODAY -- WITH INSTANT COMMUNICATION, AND WITH SPEEDY AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION -- THESE HUNDREDS OF ISLANDS CAN BE EFFECTIVELY JOINED TOGETHER, ADMINISTRATIVELY, POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY.

AS A MIGHTY CONFEDERATION OF SOVEREIGNTIES, YOUR VOICE WILL BE HEARD ON MATTERS CONCERNING THE OCEAN, ITS ANIMAL LIFE, AND ITS EXPLOITATION.

BY JOINING TOGETHER IN THIS CONFEDERATION, YOU CAN LEARN FROM THE MISTAKES AND SUCCESSES OF OTHERS.

YOU CAN, BY DELIBERATE PLANNING, PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT, THE OCEAN, AND EQUALLY AS IMPORTANT, YOUR CULTURES.

BY FORMING A CONFEDERATION, YOU CAN CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN YOUR INDIVIDUAL SOVEREIGNTIES WHILE STRENGTHENING YOUR VOICE AND YOUR POWER.

ALTHOUGH, WHILE IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN THE INTENT OF THE SPONSORS AND HOSTS OF THIS GATHERING, THE SEED OF CONFEDERATION HAS BEEN PLANTED BY THESE GATHERINGS ON MAUI.

YOU HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET, TO DISCUSS, AND TO SHARE YOUR DREAMS AND PROBLEMS WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS IN THE PACIFIC AND YOU HAVE FOUND THAT THERE IS A COMMONALITY -- A COMMONALITY OF AMBITIONS AND HOPES -- A COMMONALITY OF PROBLEMS -- A COMMONALITY OF CULTURE AND LANGUAGE -- AND ABOVE ALL, THE COMMONALITY OF BEING INSULAR PEOPLE.

I MOST RESPECTFULLY SUGGEST THAT THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY THAT MUST BE RECOGNIZED AND GIVEN THE MOST SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BY ALL OF YOU.