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Comments: During the 5-3 decision of the Supreme Court case, *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association*, 485 U.S. 439 (1988), it was concluded that though the government's actions would have severe adverse effects on the Indians' practice of their religion, but those effects were only incidental and did not constitute an attempt to coerce Native Americans to act in violation of their beliefs. The Court reasoned that the government could not operate, "if it were required to satisfy every citizen's religious needs and desires." (Oyez.com) But, what if the government's actions knowingly by so called incidental means, allows the destruction of physical places of religious origin for US citizens which have stewarded the area since time immemorial?

If we find graphite mining to be lucrative under Golgotha/Calvary hill where it is believed Jesus Christ was crucified, would we attempt to test mine the hill? If there was potential for graphite mining under/through the Vatican, would we knowingly "incidentally" damage the building through "careful" deconstruction to reach a profit? We would assume not, but under previous ruling of the Supreme Court, there should not be a problem with moving forward, destroying Calvary hill and the Vatican as the government is supposedly not hindering the ability or exercise for religious groups to worship at those locations or coercing anyone directly to act in violation of their beliefs. Obviously the US government fortunately isn't determining those decisions abroad, but unfortunately they are being made here domestically amongst its own sovereign citizens. Pe' Sla is sacred to all humanity as it holds information and answers to places of origin for many Indigenous cultures. Its antiquity predates any European belief system. Future generations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens will be hindered from their education and ability to exercise long-standing religious protocols if any form of mining pierces this sacred land.

What this simply boils down to is the imbalance of protecting long-standing religious freedoms and space indisputably possessed by Indigenous citizens of the United States. Profit over people does not need to be the Federal standard. The continued purposeful deicide and ecocide allowed through permanent destruction of religious spaces directly continues contemporary genocide and amplifies disenfranchised traumas. Protecting sacred areas which provide education for all US citizens should be at the forefront, as treaty agreements are the supreme law of the land. We cannot mine to a greener future. If European immigrants originally traveled to what is now called the United States on pretense of avoiding religious persecutions, we should deny the access and practice of destroying the sacred spaces and religions through mining, of our own citizens. Protect Pe' Sla!

Thank you for your time,

Michael