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14	THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES AND	
15	BANDS OF THE YAKAMA INDIAN	Civil No. CV-11-3038-RMP
16	NATION,	
10	D1 : .:cc	UNITED STATES'
17	Plaintiff,	MOTION FOR SUMMARY
18	V.	JUDGMENT
19	ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO TAX	With Oral Argument
	AND TRADE BUREAU, et al.,	December 4, 2013
20		9:00 a.m., Yakima
21	Defendants.	
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	Introduc	ction
24	This case presents the claim of the n	laintiff The Confederated Tribes and
25	This case presents the claim of the p	laintiff, The Confederated Tribes and
26	Bands of the Yakama Indian Nation ("Yak	ama Nation"), that King Mountain
	U.S.' MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT - 1	J

Tobacco Co., Inc. ("King Mountain"), which manufactures cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco in its facilities on the Yakama Reservation, is exempt from the federal excise tax that applies to all other manufacturers. The Yakama Nation also seeks a declaration that it is entitled to a face-to-face meeting with the President to negotiate a resolution. The United States of America, which is the true defendant, denies that the Yakama Nation is entitled to any relief as a matter of law.

Motion

The United States hereby moves for summary judgment under Rule 56(a) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and Local Rules 7.1 and 56.1 as to all claims remaining for decision. There are no genuine issues of material fact, and, in light of the Court's previous rulings as contained in its Order Denying Plaintiffs' Motion to Strike and Granting in Part and Denying in Part Defendants' Motion to Dismiss (ECF Doc. 83), its Order Denying Plaintiff's Motion for Partial Summary Judgment (ECF Doc. 103), and its Order Denying Plaintiff's Motion to Amend Order and Stay Proceedings (ECF Doc. 121), the United States is entitled to a judgment dismissing this action as a matter of law.

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Statement of Facts

These facts are reprinted for convenience of reference from the Statement of Facts filed herewith under Local Rule 56.1. The Court has found that these facts "are not in dispute." ECF Doc. 103 at 1.

- 1. The Yakama Nation is a federally recognized Indian tribe.
- 2. King Mountain is a corporation organized, existing, and operating under the laws of the Yakama Nation.
- 3. Delbert Wheeler, Sr., is an enrolled member of the Yakama Nation and is the owner and operator of King Mountain.
- 4. King Mountain's manufacturing facilities are located within the boundaries of the Yakama Nation Reservation on property held in trust by the United States for the beneficial use of Mr. Wheeler.
- 5. Some of the tobacco used by King Mountain is grown on Yakama Nation trust land. The trust-land grown tobacco is then blended with other tobacco to produce King Mountain products.

Issues Presented

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1. Whether the Court has already ruled that the Yakama Nation cannot prevail on its claims under the General Allotment Act and Article II of the Treaty—no matter how much of King Mountain's tobacco is grown on the Reservation.

- 2. Whether <u>Ramsey</u> forecloses the Yakama Nation's claim under Article III of the Treaty.
- 3. Whether the Yakama Nation's claim under Section 4225 of the Internal Revenue Code fails based on the plain language of the statute.
- 4. Whether the Yakama Nation's claim to a face-to-face meeting with the President lacks any support in the Treaty or Minutes, or in the Executive Order and Presidential Memoranda at issue.

Argument

1. The Court has already ruled that the Yakama Nation cannot prevail on its claims under the General Allotment Act and Article II of the Treaty—no matter how much of King Mountain's tobacco is grown on the Reservation.

The Yakama Nation's primary claims have already been effectively denied. The Court, at page 2 of its Order Denying Plaintiff's Motion to Amend Order and Stay Proceedings, ECF Doc. 121, "rejected the Yakama Nation's arguments that imposition of a tobacco excise tax on a tobacco company owned and operated by an enrolled member of the Yakama Nation on Yakama Nation trust land that incorporated trust-land grown tobacco into its products violated the General Allotment Act and [Article II of] the Treaty of 1855." The Court noted that when it denied the plaintiff's motion for partial summary judgment on those claims (ECF Doc. 103), it "functionally resolved a subset of the Yakama Nation's claims in this action." ECF Doc. 121 at 2. In other words, the United States is entitled to a judgment of dismissal as to those claims. This would U.S.' MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT -4

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remain true even if all of King Mountain's tobacco came from trust land, as explained below.

General Allotment Act

In rejecting the Yakama Nation's General Allotment Act claim, the Court relied on Squire v. Capoeman, 351 U.S. 1 (1956). ECF Doc. 103 at 5-11. Capoeman held that a tribal member was not liable for federal income tax on the proceeds of timber harvested from his allotted trust land. Id. The General Allotment Act promised that the allotted land eventually would be transferred to the allottee free from any encumbrance. *Id.* Unpaid taxes, though, would give rise to a tax lien or encumbrance against the land. *Id.* Accordingly, to prevent a tax lien from arising, all income "directly" from the allotted land, such as capital gains from the sale of timber, was exempt from tax. Id. Compare Dillon v. United States, 792 F.2d 849 (9th Cir. 1986) (income from smokeshop located on reservation land in Washington state was not tax-free because it was not generated principally and directly from the land; it was more akin to reinvestment income); Hale v. United States, 579 F.Supp. 646 (E.D. Wash. 1984) (landlord's income from allotted land leased to smokeshop tenant was not exempt under the Act because such income was not directly derived from the land).

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This Court, after assuming that the <u>Capoeman</u> rule could apply to excise
taxes as well as income taxes (a view the United States does not share, since
excise taxes apply to activities, not to income; see U.S.' Memorandum, ECF
Doc. 94 at 8), held that <u>Capoeman</u> provided no exemption from federal tobacco
excise tax because King Mountain's products were not "directly" and
"principally" derived from trust land. ECF Doc. 103 at 9 (discussing <u>Dillon v.</u>
<u>United States</u> , 792 F.2d 849 (9 th Cir. 1986)). The Court reasoned that the excise
tax statute "does not tax Mr. Wheeler or King Mountain for growing tobacco."
ECF Doc. 103 at 8. "Instead, King Mountain is taxed [under section 5701 of the
Internal Revenue Code] because it manufactured cigarettes and roll-your-own
tobacco in the United States." Id. That some of the tobacco in King Mountain's
products comes from allotted land was not material: "The fact that King
Mountain included trust-grown tobacco into its products does not change the
scope of the excise tax." Id.

When the Court entered ECF Doc. 103, the evidence before it was that King Mountain's products contained 20 percent trust-grown tobacco. *Id.* at 9. The Yakama Nation is expected to argue that the percentage is currently much higher. This is not material, though.

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Even if 100 percent of King Mountain's tobacco came from allotted land, the result would be the same. King Mountain's cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco would still not be "directly" from the land; rather, those products would come from "reinvestment income" (ECF Doc. 103 at 8), as the Court has already decided:

The Court in <u>Capoeman</u> drew a distinction between income derived directly from trust land and income derived from previous income, which the Court called reinvestment income. 351 U.S. at 9. Direct income was not taxable while reinvestment income was taxable. *Id.* Even though this case involves an excise tax instead of an income tax, the Court finds this distinction relevant.

[King Mountain's] finished cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco are . . . products derived from a product directly derived from the land. The cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco are not directly derived from trust land for purposes of <u>Capoeman</u>, and application of the excise tax to the cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco is permissible.

See also Matter of Cabazon Indian Casino, 57 B.R. 398 (9th Cir. BAP 1986) (tribal casino located on reservation land was not exempt from federal gambling excise tax under Capoeman because the tax was not directly on the land).

Thus under <u>Capoeman</u> it is a necessary condition that the income be directly from allotted land in order to be eligible for an exemption from federal tax. Satisfaction of that direct condition is not sufficient because the income must also be principally from the land. *See* ECF Doc. 103 at 9. "[E]ven where some value comes directly from trust land, the <u>Capoeman</u> rule should not apply

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in cases where 'income was not generated principally from the use of reservation land and resources.'" *Id.* (quoting <u>Dillon</u>, 792 F.2d at 855-56). The Court proceeded to rule that King Mountain's products were not "principally" from trust land because, among other things, only 20 percent of the tobacco was grown on the Yakama Reservation. *Id.* In the United States' view, this latter ruling was not necessary to the Court's decision because the <u>Capoeman</u> exception requires the taxpayer to meet both the "directly" and the "principally" test, and the Court had already determined that King Mountain's manufactured products, being the fruit of reinvestment income, could not be "directly" from the land. The Court did not even need to reach the "principally" issue because the Yakama Nation had not satisfied the threshold "directly" requirement.

Additionally, as the Court observed, any tax exemption under <u>Capoeman</u> would apply only with respect to the allottee-taxpayer's own land, based on the Ninth Circuit's decision in <u>United States v. Anderson</u>, 625 F.2d 910, 914 (9th Cir. 1980). *See* ECF Doc. 103 at 10-11. Here, Delbert Wheeler is the allottee and King Mountain is the taxpayer. Taxes incurred by King Mountain would not give rise to a lien against Wheeler's land unless an alter ego/nominee relationship were proven, and no evidence of such a relationship has been offered. *Id.* "Therefore, under the reasoning of *Anderson*, the *Capoeman*

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exception to taxation would not apply to income earned by King Mountain." *Id.* at 11.

Article II of Treaty

The Yakama Nation claims an exemption from federal tax under Article II of the Treaty, which in relevant part established the Reservation for the "exclusive use and benefit" of the Yakama Nation. In determining whether Article II provided such an exemption, the Court first looked to Ramsey v.

United States, 302 F.3d 1074 (9th Cir. 2002). ECF Doc. 103 at 11. The Court noted that when state tax law is at issue, the Treaty "must be interpreted in the light most favorable to the Indians, and extrinsic evidence may be used to show the federal government's and Indians' intent." *Id.* at 13, quoting 302 F.3d at 1079. But when federal tax law is at issue, a different approach is required. *Id.* The court's duty is to look first at the treaty itself to see if it contains any "express exemptive language." *Id.* If it does not, the inquiry ends without reaching the Indian canons of construction or considering extrinsic evidence:

[W]here federal tax law is at issue, a court must first determine whether the treaty contains "express exemptive language." *Id.* at 1078. Only if the treaty contains express exemptive language does the court proceed to determine whether that language could be reasonably construed to support exemption from taxation. *Id.* at 1079. The question before this Court, then, is whether Article II contains express exemptive language. In making this inquiry, the Court will not consider evidence extrinsic to the Treaty itself.

Id.

a.

The Court looked also to <u>Hoptowit v. Commissioner</u>, 709 F.2d 564 (9th Cir. 1983), which applied the General Allotment Act/<u>Capoeman</u> analysis to an Article II exemption claim. ECF Doc. 103 at 13. <u>Hoptowit</u> concluded that "any tax exemption created by this language [in Article II] is limited to the income derived directly from the land." *Id.* at 14. The income at issue there was not derived directly from the land but from a smokeshop located on the land, so it was not exempt. *Id.*

The Court then repeated its previous ruling that since the excise tax at issue in this case is not imposed on products directly derived from allotted land, no exemption can arise:

This Court already has held that King Mountain does not enjoy an exemption from the federal excise tax on tobacco products under <u>Capoeman</u> because the tax is not imposed on products directly derived from the land. Therefore, to the degree that Article II contains express exemptive language, the exemption to taxation created by Article II would not apply to the facts of this case. *Id.* Accordingly, the Plaintiff has failed to establish an exemption to the excise tax under the Treaty.

ECF Doc. 103 at 14-15.

The Court concluded by denying the Yakama Nation's motion for partial summary judgment:

Enrolled members of federally recognized Indian tribes, as United States citizens, are subject to federal taxation unless explicitly exempted U.S.' MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT

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under federal law or by treaty. Fry v. United States, 557 F.2d 646, 647 (9th Cir. 1977). King Mountain is not exempt from federal excise tax on tobacco products under the General Allotment Act and Capoeman because the excise tax does not tax products directly derived from the land. Any exception to taxation that could be inferred in Article II of the Treaty is similarly limited to products derived directly from the land. Hoptowit, 709 F.2d at 566. Therefore, the excise tax also is not precluded by the Treaty.

ECF Doc. 103 at 14-15. In short, the Court reasoned that since no exemption applies under Capoeman, none applies under Article II.

Although the Court assumed in ECF Doc. 103 that Article II might contain express exemptive language ("to the degree that Article II contains express exemptive language . . ."), the United States contends that it is clear that no such language actually appears in Article II. In Hoptowit v. Commissioner, 78 T.C. 137 (1982), *aff'd*, 709 F.2d 564 (9th Cir. 1983), the Tax Court rejected the claim of a member of the Yakama Nation that he was entitled to an exemption from federal income tax based on Article II's exclusive-use-and-benefit language:

The treaty nowhere expressly deals with the question of taxation of the tribe or its members [W]e do not think it can be read to exempt the income of a member of the tribe from Federal taxation.

78 T.C. at 143. The Tax Court cited <u>United States v. Farris</u>, 624 F.2d 890, 893 (9th Cir. 1980), which noted "that general treaty language such as that devoting land to a tribe's 'exclusive use' is not sufficient to exempt Indians from Federal

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laws of general applicability." <u>Farris</u> concluded that the "exclusive use" clause of the Medicine Creek Treaty was not specific enough to preempt a federal gambling excise tax. 624 F.2d at 893. <u>Farris</u> and <u>Hoptowit</u> reinforce the Court's conclusion that Article II provides King Mountain with no exemption from federal tax.

2. <u>Ramsey</u> forecloses the Yakama Nation from prevailing on its claim under Article III of the Treaty.

The Court has not in previous orders ruled whether Article III of the

Treaty exempts King Mountain from excise tax. It hardly needed to. In

Ramsey, the Ninth Circuit made it clear that Article III's travel-and-trade clause lacks any "express exemptive language." Article III therefore cannot provide any exemption from federal excise tax as a matter of law.

This conclusion is clear from a review of <u>Ramsey</u>. Kip Ramsey, an enrolled member of the Yakama Nation, did business as a sole proprietor, logging timber on tractor-trailers from the reservation to market. 302 F.3d at 1076. He claimed he was exempt from federal excise taxes on highway use and diesel fuel, relying on Article III, paragraph 1 of the Treaty:

[I]f necessary for the public convenience, roads may be run throughout the reservation; and on the other hand, the right of way, with free access from the same to the nearest public highway, is secured to them; as also the right in common with the citizens of the United States, to travel upon all public highways.

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Id. Ramsey argued that he should prevail based on <u>Cree v. Flores</u>, 157 F.3d 762 (9th Cir. 1998), where his logging company won an exemption from Washington state highway-related taxes under the Treaty. *Id.* at 1077. As to that state tax exemption claim, <u>Cree</u> held that the Treaty should be construed as the Yakama would have understood its terms in 1855. *Id.*

On cross-motions for summary judgment, the district court ruled for Ramsey, concluding that the <u>Cree</u> analysis was applicable to federal taxes as well as state taxes. <u>Ramsey</u>, 134 F.Supp.2d at 1204, 1207-09. The Ninth Circuit reversed. Ramsey, 302 F.3d at 1080.

Agreeing with the government, the Ninth Circuit held that the <u>Cree</u> analysis was inapplicable because a different, more exacting standard applied to a claim to an exemption from federal tax as opposed to state tax:

The applicability of a federal tax to Indians depends on whether express exemptive language exists within the text of the statute or treaty. The language need not explicitly state that Indians are exempt from the specific tax at issue; it must only provide evidence of the federal government's intent to exempt Indians from taxation. Treaty language such as "free from incumbrance," "free from taxation," and "free from fees," are but some examples of express exemptive language required to find Indians exempt from federal tax.

302 F.3d at 1078-79. Under this federal standard, the "canon of construction favoring Indians" does not come into play unless the court first finds "express

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exemptive language" within the four corners of the treaty. *Id.* at 1079. By this standard, the Treaty contained no possible tax exemption:

The Treaty simply states that "free access from the [reservation] to the nearest public highway, is secured to [the Yakama Nation]; as also the right, in common with the citizens of the United States, to travel upon all public highways." 12 Stat. at 953. This provision does not provide express language from which we can discern an intent to exempt the Yakama from federal heavy vehicle and diesel fuel taxation.

Id. at 1080. The Ninth Circuit remanded for entry of summary judgment in favor of the United States. *Id.*

Granted, the Ninth Circuit's standard is more restrictive than that of the Third Circuit and the Eighth Circuit. *Compare* Lazore v. Commissioner, 11 F.3d 1180, 1185 (3rd Cir. 1993) (to support an exemption from federal tax, Indian treaty need not contain a "definitely expressed exemption"; instead, treaty must contain language that "can reasonably be construed to confer [the claimed tax exemptions]"); Holt v. Commissioner, 364 F.2d 38, 40 (8th Cir. 1966) (to the same effect). Yet the United States would prevail even under this less restrictive standard because the Treaty contains no language that reasonably can be construed to confer an exemption from the federal tobaccomanufacturer's excise tax.

Consequently, the Yakama Nation's exemption claim in this case under Article III must fail for the same reason that Ramsey's claim failed—the lack of express exemptive language.

3. The Yakama Nation's claim under Section 4225 of the Internal Revenue Code must fail based on the plain language of the statute.

Internal Revenue Code section 4225's limited exemption for American Indian handicrafts does not by its terms apply to the tobacco manufacturer's taxes at issue, notwithstanding the allegations of the Amended Complaint to the contrary. The face of the statute rules out any other conclusion. Section 4225, "Exemption of Articles Manufactured or Produced by Indians," states:

No tax shall be imposed under this chapter on any article of native Indian handicraft manufactured or produced by Indians on Indian reservations, or in Indian schools, or by Indians under the jurisdiction of the United States Government in Alaska.

26 U.S.C. § 4225. The referenced chapter is Chapter 32, "Manufacturers Excise Taxes." Chapter 32 contains taxes on sporting goods such as bows and arrows, that is, traditional Indian handicrafts. 26 U.S.C. § 4161(b). King Mountain's products are not Indian handicrafts. Plus, the tobacco excise tax, 26 U.S.C. § 5701, is not in Chapter 32. It is in Chapter 52, "Tobacco Products and Cigarette Papers and Tubes." Section 4225 cannot exempt King Mountain from Chapter 52 taxes.

4. The Yakama Nation's claim to a face-to-face meeting with the President lacks any support in the Treaty and Minutes, or in the Executive Order and Presidential Memoranda at issue.

The Yakama Nation's request to meet directly with the President and his staff—a request allegedly supported by the Treaty and its Minutes and by an Executive Order and two Presidential Memoranda—cannot be maintained.

The Yakama Nation asks this Court to declare that President Obama and his Indian affairs experts must negotiate with its representatives face-to-face to work out a satisfactory solution to King Mountain's tax problem. Specifically, the Yakama Nation claims that it is entitled to "meaningful consultation and resolution without threats of litigation, prosecution, or legal proceedings." ECF Doc. 16 at 53. The Treaty cannot support this claim. It contains no language from which a right to such a meeting can be based. And the Yakama Nation does not even rely on the Treaty itself but on the Minutes: the Court observed in ECF Doc. 83 that the Yakama Nation's "argument is born of alleged oral promises during treaty negotiations that the tribal elders would be able to speak with the 'Great Chief.'" ECF Doc. 83 at 3, n.1.

However, the Minutes contain no oral promises by the President's agents that the Yakamas would be able to meet directly with the President to resolve any disputes under the Treaty. The Minutes show that communications with the LLS' MOTION FOR SUMMARY

President regarding the Treaty would take place through his authorized agents or in writing. *See* Minutes, ECF Doc. 16-1, at 29, 40. The Minutes leave no room for reasonable doubt.

Just as the Treaty and Minutes provide no basis for a face-to-face meeting with the President, the Executive Order and Memoranda cited by the Yakama Nation provide no basis, either, because they contain no language that can be reasonably construed to give King Mountain a right of consultation before normal tax assessment and collection activity by TTB. And assuming solely for the sake of argument that such a right could be found in the subject Executive Order or Memoranda, King Mountain could not compel the Executive Branch to negotiate a satisfactory resolution.

As a general rule, private parties may not enforce executive orders. <u>Chai v. Carroll</u>, 48 F.3d 1331, 1339 (4th Cir. 1995); <u>Zhang v. Slattery</u>, 55 F.3d 732, 747-48 (2d Cir. 1995). Executive orders are generally viewed "as a managerial tool for implementing the President's personal economic policies and not as a legal framework enforceable by private civil action." <u>Independent Meat Packers Ass'n v. Butz</u>, 526 F.2d 228, 236 (8th Cir. 1975). In no event is an executive order judicially reviewable if it expressly disclaims a private right of action.

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City of Carmel-by-the-Sea v. United States Dep't of Transp., 123 F.3d 1142, 1166 (9th Cir. 1997).

The Executive Order and Memoranda contain express disclaimers.

President Clinton's Executive Order 13175, Fed. Reg. vol. 65, no. 218, Nov. 9, 2000, "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments," specifically precludes any private right of action:

Sec. 10. Judicial Review. This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch, and it not intended to create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the United States, its agencies, or any person.

This Executive Order was preceded by President Clinton's May 4, 1994 memorandum on the same subject, "Memorandum on Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments," which contained a substantially identical disclaimer. Similarly, President Obama's "Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, Subject: Tribal Consultation," dated Nov. 5, 2009, which implemented President Clinton's Executive Order, contains an express disclaimer of any private right of action.

It follows that the Yakama Nation's claim for an audience with the President must fail as a matter of law.

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At any rate, representatives of the Executive Branch have in fact met with representatives of the Yakama Nation and King Mountain to discuss Treatyrelated issues. The meeting took place in Washington, D.C. in 2010. ECF Doc. 16 at 17. The government participants included the President's Senior Policy Advisor on Native American Affairs, the Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, the head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, an Assistant Secretary of the Interior, and the Deputy Director of the Justice Department's Office of Tribal Justice. Id. King Mountain asked for a meeting with high-level Executive Branch officials, and it got one. King Mountain's concerns were heard. /// /// ///

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Conclusion

Based on the foregoing and on the rest of the record herein, there is no genuine issue of material fact and the United States is entitled as a matter of law to summary judgment dismissing the remaining claims in this action.

DATED this 1st day of October, 2013.

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U.S.' MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT

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3					
4	the foregoing document with the Clerk of the Court using the CM/ECF System,				
5	which will send notification of such filing to the following:				
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