



# Federations

What's new in federalism worldwide

volume 1, number 5, summer 2001

## *In this issue*

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Is Europe heading towards a federal constitution? *By Uwe Leonardy*

*After German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer gave a controversial speech last year arguing for a more federal Europe, other leaders have now joined the debate about the value of a federal constitution for the expanding EU. The member states have already ceded some powers to the EU—how much more sovereignty are they willing to give up?*

State elections foretell a power shift at India's centre *By Prasenjit Maiti*

*The state elections in May showed that, more than ever before, India's national political parties have to form alliances with regional parties to maintain power. Can India's central governments pursue a coherent agenda if they are beholden to this plurality of local interests?*

Education reform, school vouchers and privatization in the USA *By Bill Berkowitz*

*Education is President George W. Bush's "marquee" issue. He made educational reforms the centrepiece of his governorship and of his election campaign. But the Bill that the House of Representatives recently passed altered some of his most cherished conservative proposals.*

Ethiopia: the challenge of many nationalities *By Hashim Tewfik Mohammed*

*Modern Ethiopian history has been characterized by internecine wars, famine, and economic deterioration. But in the past decade, there has been a consistent move, culminating in the adoption of a new constitution, towards giving self-government to the various ethnic groups and incorporating them into a consensual federal structure.*

Two new initiatives for reforming aboriginal governance in Canada *By Paul Barnsley*

*Most observers agree that the Canadian federal law dealing with aboriginal peoples is an antiquated hold-over from colonial times. But the government's recent proposals for amending the law have elicited protest and opposition from the leaders of Canada's First Nations, who have their own ideas about how aboriginal people should be governed.*

The PRACTITIONER'S Page: *Cesario Melantonio Neto of Brazil*

*In an interview with Federations, Cesario Melantonio Neto speaks about the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' programme of sending "ambassadors" to the principal regions of Brazil. At a time when provinces, states and regions are increasingly involved in foreign relations, this Brazilian example of coordination may have something to offer other federations.*

### **Contributors to this Issue**

**Paul Barnsley** is a senior writer for *Windspeaker*—Canada's National Native News Publication. He writes about political, legal and social issues as they affect indigenous peoples in Canada. **Bill Berkowitz** is a freelance writer based in Oakland, California. He writes a regular column for the web site [www.workingforchange.com](http://www.workingforchange.com). **Uwe Leonardy** is the Vice-Chairman of the Comparative Federalism Research Committee of the International Political Science Association. He is former Head of the division dealing with constitutional matters of the Lower Saxony Mission to the Federation, Germany. **Prasenjit Maiti** is a Lecturer in Political Science at Burdwan University in West Bengal, India. He wrote an article on Indian constitutional reform for the previous issue of *Federations*. **Hashim Tewfik Mohammed** has worked as a legal advisor, prosecutor and a judge in the Federal High Court of Ethiopia. He is currently a Ph.D student at the University of Melbourne, Australia.

***The Forum of Federations, an international network, seeks to strengthen democratic governance by promoting dialogue on and understanding of the values, practices, principles, and possibilities of federalism.***

## *From the editors...*

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**A** little more than a year ago, before we launched this publication, we canvassed people around the world for their ideas and suggestions. What we wanted to produce, we told them, was a kind of international “newspaper” on events that relate to federalism.

Looking at the current issue and the four that precede it we think that we’re at least part way to our goal.

We’ve had reports on developments related to the evolution of federalism from sixteen different countries. Most of these are functioning federations. In the others, significant segments of the population are considering the option of federalism. In this issue we look beyond individual countries to the current debate in the European Union about the notion of a federal constitution for the “new Europe”.

We’ve always aimed to present the facts and analysis in a concise, non-technical, narrative fashion—sort of the way your daily newspaper might do it if your newspaper were interested in federalism!

And while we’re on that subject, we should point out that virtually all our articles are written by people who live and work in the regions on which they report.

When we report on countries such as India or Brazil or South Africa we don’t give you a “western”, or “northern” perspective on the “developing world”. We make a point of bringing you the story from the inside.

If this organization is dedicated to any basic notion it is that practitioners of federalism in diverse situations have not had sufficient opportunity to learn from each other. ***Federations*** is part of our effort to change that—as was an event the Forum held this past April in the Canadian heartland city of Winnipeg.

The Winnipeg Conference on the Role of Constituent Units in Foreign Relations involved delegates and speakers from around the world, with a large group from Latin America, and others from India, a few African countries, the USA, Canada, Russia and Western Europe.

The exchanges over the two days of the event were lively and informed—sometimes passionate.


When Gary Doer, Premier of the host province of Manitoba, opened the floor to questions a Nigerian delegate raised the issue of the control of natural resources in federations—a matter as hotly debated in Canada as it is in Nigeria.

When an official of the Buenos Aires State government discussed the “plight” of being the most populous constituent unit in a federation, the representatives of Canada’s most populous province, Ontario, saw comparisons with their own situation.

And when a Mexican delegate bemoaned the fact that state governments in his country are constrained by trade agreements from blocking private sector projects that could wreak environmental havoc, many could identify with the dilemma he described.

The Forum of Federations is working to create more such opportunities for practitioners to learn from each other, through conferences, workshops and the like, and through publications. We’d like to hear from you—about the Forum’s programs, about anything you’ve read in ***Federations***, or about any issue related to the practice of federalism. Write us at our address below, or e-mail us at: ***forum@forumfed.org***

We will post letters related to ***Federations*** on our web site ([www.forumfed.org](http://www.forumfed.org)). The site also has complete information about the Forum and all our projects, links to information related to the articles in this and earlier issues of ***Federations***, stories from the world’s press on federal developments, and other federalism related links.

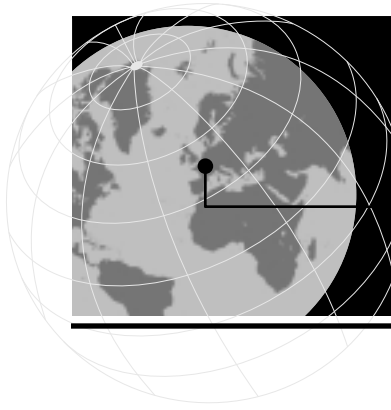
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# Is Europe heading towards a federal constitution?

BY UWE LEONARDY

**There** have been ideas and ideals about a European Constitution ever since the original six-member European Community was founded more than four decades ago. Now, for the first time, these ideas are emerging into the realm of political reality—in part because of the anticipated expansion of the EU.

Leading politicians have taken up the challenge.

In May 2000, Joschka Fischer, the German Foreign Minister, got the ball rolling with a controversial speech where he reflected on the next phase in European integration. Shortly thereafter the argument was joined by French President Jacques Chirac and Jacques Delors, former President of the European Commission.

Last fall, shortly before the European Council met in Nice, Prime Minister Tony Blair presented the British response in a speech in Warsaw entitled Superpower—not Superstate. The first to weigh in after the signing of the Treaty of Nice in February was the German Federal President Johannes Rau, with a Plea for a European Constitution in an address to the European Parliament early in April 2001.

Early in May 2001, the German Social Democratic Party—at the instigation of its leader Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder—published a Draft Resolution, Responsibility for Europe which the Party will consider at its Convention in the fall.

Finally, late in May, French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin entered the fray with a series of detailed proposals laid out in a speech in Paris.

## ***Some common ground***

There are vast differences in the proposals put forward by these leaders. But they all agree on a few points—almost all of which are covered by the Treaty of Nice:

The European Union (EU) is a hybrid. Although originating in international law it contains numerous elements of a state's constitution. It has wide-ranging legislative powers which it mainly exercises in the name of so-called "community objectives", i.e. broadly defined political aims rather than clear-cut competence provisions.

At the same time it establishes a comprehensive set of institutions both for the making of the EU's own laws and for co-ordinating functions between the Union and its member states. Its capacity to create laws of its own, which are binding either directly on individual citizens ("ordinances") or on the member states as framework rules ("directives"), distinguishes the EU from all other international bodies.

The "constitution" of the EU is set out in texts of international law, commonly referred to as "the Treaties": first the Treaty on the European Economic Community of 1957, and second, the Treaty on the European Union of 1992 (the Maastricht Treaty), revised by the Treaty of Amsterdam of 1997 and presently under revision again by the 2001 Treaty of Nice.

The Union Treaty distinguishes between 3 component parts of the EU, known as its 3 "pillars": 1) the EC as the centrepiece of full supranational activity, 2) rules on

Joint Foreign and Defence Policy, and 3) provisions on co-operation in the areas of police and administration of justice.

The European Commission is the "guardian of the Treaties" and the "motor of integration", exercising the sole right of legislative initiative and carrying out functions similar to those of the executive branch of a nation-state.

The Council of Ministers (with the European Council of the Heads of Governments at its top) and the (elected) European Parliament now share the right of legislation in most fields. The European Court of Justice has the last word in disputes both on the applicability of EU law itself and on the conformity of national law (including constitutional law) with the supranational rules.

The EC originally had 6 member states. It now has 15. Currently it is expanding, mainly into eastern Europe—with the aim of growing to a possible 27 member states. The existing decision-making process is quite cumbersome. Some cases still require unanimity and many others require qualified majorities in a complicated system of weighted voting. That is why many believe it is necessary to devise a kind of new "European constitution" before the EU gets much bigger.

- a new system of weighting the votes of the member states in the Council;
- a considerable increase in the matters decided by majority voting;
- rules for the future maximum size both of the European Parliament and of the Commission (after EU expansion);
- an “officialization”, though still not in a legally binding form, of a Charter of Basic Rights;
- and a pledge to define the legislative competencies of the EU vis-à-vis its member states in clearer and more calculable terms than exist at present (to be achieved by 2004).

There is also general agreement on the need for more transparency and democracy in the EU-structures.

In addition, nobody is proposing abolishing the sovereign nation-states that make up the EU—whatever its future constitutional shape.

Then there are the many more points where the main players are in disagreement.

### ***A constitution for Europe?***

On the need for a European Constitution as such, Rau, Fischer, Delors and (though vague in substance) Chirac are in favour. Schroeder is silent on the issue. Rau’s plea outspokenly aims at a Federation of National States comprising all member states from its start.

Fischer, however, sees a European Federation as the last step towards integration by a Constitutional Treaty. But he asserts that this step can be achieved only after temporarily creating a centre of gravity—organized under a new European Basic Treaty with a Constitution of its own—for a select group of those member states who are prepared to go ahead and act as a kind of vanguard for the rest.

Delors comes closest to that, while Chirac agrees with the idea of such a Vanguard Group but one that would not have a treaty and institutions of its own. Instead he prefers intensified cooperation open to all—which should end in a European Constitution that would include a Charter of Basic Rights.

In sharp contrast to all of this, Blair refuses to envisage a constitution in a formal document. He wants Europe to be

an economic and political superpower—not, in its constitution and organization, a superstate.

### ***A European “Senate” and an executive branch***

On the future institutional structure the most “federalist” ideas are those proposing a bicameral EU Legislature, which are contained in the German and the British concepts. Rau and Schroeder suggest that the EU Council of Ministers be converted into a Chamber of States (similar to the German Bundesrat) with the present European Parliament as an equally empowered Chamber of Citizens.

Fischer discusses an elected Senate as an optional model for the second chamber. Blair, however, prefers this chamber to consist of members of the national parliaments.

Similar proposals for “indirect election” also come into play in some visions on restructuring the European Parliament. Fischer wants only members of the national parliaments in it, while Delors proposes a (transitional) parliament of the “avantgarde” that would be composed equally of members of national parliaments and of the current European Parliament.

As for an executive branch of government for the EU, Rau and Schroeder want the present Commission to serve that function, while Fischer has floated the option of either developing a European Government out of the present European Council or of having the President of the Commission popularly elected. Jospin suggested that the winning bloc of parties in European elections select a Commission President.

### ***Is a federal structure emerging?***

Where the new Europe really starts to look more and more federal is in the proposals for a division of powers between the EU and the governments of its member states.

All agree that a clear demarcation of legislative powers would be an essential part of a future European Constitution. But legally such a step would entail a profound restructuring of “the Treaties” that govern the EU. Given his general reluctance to go too far on integration, it is not surprising that Blair only wants a

“Statement of Principles” on this matter—a political not a legal document in a “charter of competencies”.

Britain is not alone in having reservations on this point. On the delicate question of sovereignty—whether divided, joint, national or EU—there is a wide divergence of views among the member states. Although Jospin and Chirac disagree on many details, they agree that, in Jospin’s words, they are committed to “making Europe without unmaking France.”

### ***A time to define terms***

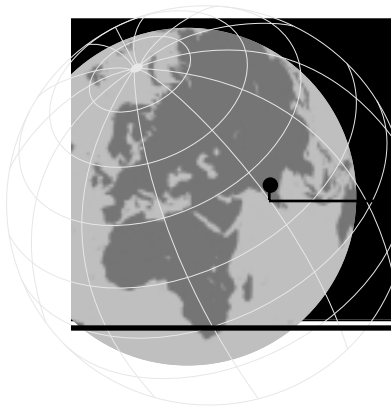
When you consider the degree of disagreement it is obvious there is still a long way to go towards a European Constitution and in particular to a generally understood and accepted “federal” one.

Despite this, the Treaty of Nice constitutes a decisive and even compelling point of departure down the road to a “federal Europe”. The Treaty started a public debate on the question of the distribution of powers among different orders of government—a process which it pledges will result in concrete changes by 2004. The agreement to distribute authority and responsibility between different levels of government is the hallmark of a federal system. Once achieved such agreement would become the centre-piece of a federal constitution for Europe.

This debate will inevitably have two main effects. First, it will bring to the surface the reality that the EU is, by its very existence as a supranational body, already a kind of functionally determined federation. And second, it will prove that Delors is only too right in stating that “federalism”, “subsidiarity”, “constitution” and “charter” do not have the same meaning for everyone.

And so, the political debate, as it stands now, is obscured by misunderstandings and sometimes deliberate distortions of those terms.

If the people of Europe are to make a lucid decision about their future they’ll have to arrive at some consensus as to what words such as “constitution” mean in the context of the EU. And to achieve such a consensus, intellectuals, the media and Europe’s political leadership will all have to do their part. ☺



# State elections foretell a power shift at India's centre

BY PRASENJIT MAITI

**More** than ever before, one-party India is a thing of the past, and the balance of power is shifting.

There were elections to five state assemblies this past May. The Indian press described them as a mini general election, a prognosis of the relative health of India's federal political parties and ad-hoc alliances.

In particular, observers looked to these state elections for indications of a change in support for the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance at New Delhi. The BJP has been in power at the center since 1999 on a platform of Hindu nationalism and right-of-center politics.

Looking to state elections for indications of federal shifts is not surprising given the increasing interaction—though often convoluted—between state politics and the distribution of power at the center. India has clearly emerged from the time when one establishment party controlled the center unchallenged. Federal parties have to build coalitions to maintain power, and these coalition partners are often the federal manifestations of local or sectarian interests.

## **The BJP loses support**

The state elections took place in May 2001, in Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Pondicherry. The Congress Party (once the dominant party of India which has faced substantial setbacks since its electoral defeat in 1996) gained significant ground in these polls while the BJP faced substantial losses.

The Congress Party captured Assam, in India's northeast, from the Asom Gana Parishad, emerging as the single largest party in the 126-member strong state assembly.

In West Bengal, the Congress formed an alliance with its breakaway faction, Mamata Banerjee's Trinamul Congress. The Congress performed even better than the Trinamul Congress in terms of percentage of seats it won relative to the total number of seats it contested.

However, the Left Front, led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), returned to power in West Bengal for the sixth time since 1977. The Communists alone, excluding their coalition partners, won 143 out of the total 294 assembly seats.

The BJP could not manage to win a single seat in West Bengal despite its traditional presence in the outlying districts bordering with Bangladesh and in former Hindu refugee settlements.

The Congress-led United Democratic Front recaptured power in Kerala, in India's south, defeating the Communist-led Left and the Democratic Front. The Congress alone captured 62 seats while the UDF coalition won 99 out of the total 140 assembly seats.

In Pondicherry, the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) joined forces with the Communists and the Congress-Tamil Manila Congress coalition to win. The BJP managed to win only one out of the total 30 seats in the Pondicherry assembly, while the Congress-TMC alliance captured 13 seats.

The AIADMK coalition (aligned with the Congress) also swept the polls in Tamil Nadu, in India's south, defeating a coalition allied with the BJP. The AIADMK, despite several corruption-related indictments against its leader, managed to capture 132 seats, and its coalition now controls 194 out of the 234 seats in the state assembly.

## **Building and burning bridges**

These state elections have indicated certain emergent trends in the Indian party system which are likely to inform the country's federal politics in the near future.

The Congress Party, out of power since 1996, is steadily reconsolidating itself in the states with the help of regional allies. It is a kind of Return-of-the-Prodigal-Son syndrome. This national party is engaged in building bridges with once dissident but powerful factions such as the Trinamul Congress in West Bengal and the Tamil Manila Congress in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry.

The Congress Party has also aligned itself with dominant regional satraps such as Jayaram Jayalalitha of AIADMK who have often called the shots even in New Delhi in the recent past. Her withdrawal of support from Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's BJP coalition government in 1999 is a case in point.

In contrast, the BJP is quickly losing friends in its effort to cultivate new alliances. It has lost the critical support of Mamata Banerjee of West Bengal (although responsibility for this split cannot be exclusively ascribed to the BJP). Assam is another example where the BJP blundered in choosing its electoral ally.

State-level leaders of the BJP have also occasionally made the party suffer by falling out with key allies. One such error of judgement even resulted in the ruling Left Front's single-seat margin defeat of the BJP and TMC in last year's municipal election in Salt Lake City, which neighbours Calcutta.

The BJP has never been quite comfortable with the idea of federal coalition building and power-sharing with regional parties. This is partly due to its

hierarchical and cadre-based organizational structure. It could also be explained by its political agenda of exclusion rather than accommodation of India's multicultural and plural identities.

This reluctance to form coalitions can be deadly to a party looking to gain power in this most diverse of countries. We have to remember that ex-Indian Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh, whose government was supported both by the "right fundamentalist" BJP and the "left progressive" Communists back in 1989, had once declared: "India is itself a coalition."

It appears that some members of the BJP have recognized this fact. As Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani of the BJP once put it:

"As a broad policy, it should be our endeavour to develop the right coalition chemistry with our allies by constantly enlarging the area of common interests, and shrinking—or at any rate inactivating—the area of differences."

But it's not clear that the federal BJP will be able to adapt to the "New India" and recover from the damage it suffered at the state level. If these elections are indeed an indication of future developments, there may well be a reemergence of a coalition-savvy Congress party on the federal stage in the near future.

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All prognostication aside, it is evident that India's federal polity has undergone a transition from the one party dominant system of rule toward what has been described as the "polarized pluralism" of successive coalition governments, made possible by situation-specific and short-term alliances between regional and mainstream parties—both at the center and at the state level.

What is uncertain is how these ad-hoc arrangements will affect the fabric of India as a whole.

Federal bargains and power sharing have elicited popular frustration with regional parties. Many in India believe these parties have narrow agendas that could drive sectarian wedges into the seams holding India together. ☹

## ***Regional Parties in India***

Regional parties first began influencing India's federal politics during and after the country's Fourth General Election in 1967—an event that is widely thought to be the major watershed of Indian politics.

The Congress Party's exclusive control was severely challenged, and the party's "deinstitutionalization" began soon after its unprecedented electoral setback. In that election, the Congress Party's majority was reduced from 361 to 284 seats in the House of the People, the lower house of parliament.

The Congress even lost its majority in the lower house in 1969. However, the minority government of Indira Gandhi (daughter of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, of the Congress) managed to continue in power with the support of the Communists and regional parties such as the Akali Dal from Punjab and the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham from Tamil Nadu.

Before 1967, the Congress managed to win 70 percent or more of the seats in the House of the People while polling less than 50 percent of the popular vote. This was due to India's first-past-the-post electoral system.

The next largest party in Parliament was the Communist Party of India with a presence that ranged from 16 to 29 seats. The Jana Sangh (forerunner of the BJP) was even weaker, with 3 to 14 seats.

Even then, however, the Congress could not dominate the state legislative assemblies. This was repeatedly the case in the Patiala and

East Punjab States Union (merged with Punjab in 1956), in North India and Madras (present-day Tamil Nadu), and in Andhra Pradesh in South India.

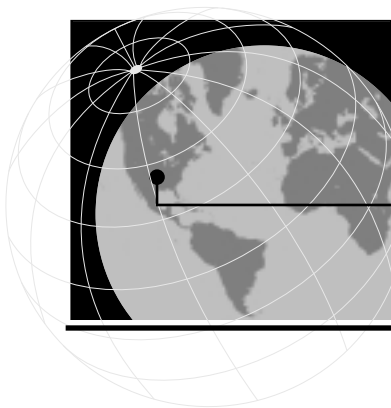
The Communists had already formed the first ever non-Congress government in Kerala as early as 1957. And the Congress increasingly had to rely on coalitions with regional political parties such as the Jharkhand Party or Ganatantra Parishad in Orissa.

In the early 1960s the Congress lost heavily in the state assemblies of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Kerala, Madras (South India) and Punjab.

Some regional opposition parties had started entering into federal electoral alliances with one another against the Congress. This had the effect of consolidating the anti-Congress vote.

This further encouraged splits within the Congress and defections in the country's legislatures. However, the various coalitional state governments that came to power in 1967 were mostly unstable power arrangements. They suffered from what was described in the press as a convenient, short-term "ideological promiscuity" that was exclusively aimed at unseating the Congress rather than designing any coherent political alternative.

Such a shift in the arrangements of the party system in India has informed the country's present-day politics, characterized by Goliaths like the Congress or BJP aligning with Davids at both the central and regional levels to win elections and successfully run coalition governments.



# Education reform, school vouchers and privatization in the USA

BY BILL BERKOWITZ

**When** President George W. Bush rolled out his “No Child Left Behind” education reform plan several months ago it was praised by his conservative supporters.

Nina Shokrai Rees—at the time an education specialist with the conservative Heritage Foundation and currently an advisor to Vice President Dick Cheney—saw Bush’s proposal as an opportunity to remake the role of the federal government.

“Standards, choice, and fiscal and legal autonomy in exchange for boosting student test scores increasingly are the watchwords of education reform in America,” Rees commented. “The principle can be used in programs that apply to whole districts as well as entire states. Importantly, it lays the groundwork for a massive overhaul of education at the federal level in much the same way that welfare reform began.”

## **Revised education bill emerges from the House**

The proposed bill changed dramatically by the time the United States House of Representatives approved the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization Bill* by an overwhelming 384-45 vote in late-May. The Senate takes up the Bill sometime in June and it may yet undergo more changes before it reaches the president’s desk.

Will the final product be, as the Bush administration claims, the most sweeping set of reforms enacted in the past several decades? Or is it a great “surrender” to liberal interest groups, as some on the right are now characterizing it? Is it a step, albeit a small one, along the road toward the privatization of the public education system in the United States? And finally, does this legislation fundamentally alter federal/state relations?

The House version of the bill contains a laundry list of initiatives, with its main focus on standardized testing and holding school districts accountable for academic performance. The bill requires annual reading and mathematics tests in grades three through eight. For the first time, it provides options for public funding of private tutors for children attending “failing” schools or for these children transferring to a different public school.

School vouchers, the use of public funds for private and/or religiously based schools—the controversial centerpiece of Bush’s original plan—was removed from the House bill. Two amendments were voted down: one providing up to \$1,500 for students in failing schools to attend private schools, and another establishing a \$50 million demonstration project to assess the effectiveness of vouchers.

This virtually eliminated the possibility that Congress will act on school vouchers during this session.

Despite the absence of any school voucher provisions, President Bush called the House vote a “giant step toward improving America’s public schools. The education reforms adopted today build on the principles of accountability, flexibility, local control and greater choices for parents.”

## **Betrayal or biding time?**

For many conservative groups who vigorously support the president, including the Heritage Foundation, the Federalist Society, the Family Research Council and Concerned Women for America, dropping school vouchers was discouraging.

The Federalist Digest said it signified the “disembowelment of Mr. Bush’s ‘bipartisan’ education plan.” Syndicated conservative newspaper columnist Robert

Novak attributed the changes to President Bush’s “desire for bipartisanship at any cost.”

Given their heightened expectations, it’s understandable that conservatives felt betrayed. After all, they had come a long way from previous years when they routinely called for decreasing the federal role through disbanding of the Department of Education (see box overleaf). During the presidential campaign, they dropped that demand in deference to Bush’s campaign strategy of moving to the center on education issues. In its place, school vouchers became one of the cornerstones of the conservative education agenda.

In his analysis of the revised education bill, Michael S. Greve claims that without vouchers giving parents the power to leave the public schools behind, “the chance for meaningful federal education reform has come and gone, not to return for another decade or so.”

Greve, writing for *The Weekly Standard*, says that “the administration’s vow to sign whatever education ‘reform’ Congress might produce has enabled the education cartel to recapture a big portion of the added funds in this very round of legislation.

Not all criticism of the bill comes from conservative quarters. Barbara Miner, managing editor of the Milwaukee-based independent quarterly journal, *Rethinking Schools* and co-editor of the book *Failing Our Kids: Why the Testing Craze Won’t Fix Our Schools*, generally supports a strong role for the federal government. Miner believes the emphasis on standardized testing is shortsighted, woefully inadequate and racially biased, and in no way measures critical thinking skills.

Miner points out “standardized tests have their origins in the Eugenics movement

earlier in this century and its belief in the intellectual superiority of northern European whites. In fact, standardized testing in our schools didn't really exist until it was decided that IQ and similar tests were a valid way to identify 'superior' and 'inferior' students."

She notes, ironically, that the bill's testing provisions have elicited little but silence from the religious/radical right, "which in the past has likened federal calls for tests and standards to federally mandated mind control."

### ***Vouchers still critical***

For conservatives, school vouchers could accomplish several long-term goals, reducing public education funding and diminishing the political clout of national teachers' unions. Conservatives claim that these labor organizations are the main impediment to educational reform.

When federal dollars are transferred from the public to the private sector—often to religiously oriented schools—these schools are less subject to the regulatory oversight, including teacher qualifications, financial accountability and the development of curricula that are applied to the public schools.

The national reversal of President Bush's vouchers initiative came just after the crushing defeat of two very well funded state voucher ballot initiatives in the November 2000 election cycle: the "Kids First! Yes!" initiative in Michigan and Proposition 38 in California. Still, proponents remain convinced vouchers are the wave of the future.

The vouchers initiative is getting generous financial support from a number of wealthy conservative philanthropists, among them Amway President Dick DeVos, who supported "Kids First! Yes!", and Silicon Valley venture capitalist Tim Draper, who bankrolled California's Proposition 38 to the tune of US\$26 million. This kind of support guarantees that vouchers will continue to be at the heart of the conservative education agenda. Additional financial resources from conservative foundations such as the Milwaukee-based Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation help to fuel the movement.

However, according to Terry Moe, a well-respected Stanford University researcher and longtime supporter of school vouchers, the path to vouchers may no longer be through complex statewide ballot initiatives.

Moe, who has received considerable financial support from conservative institutions, has written a new book entitled *Schools, Vouchers and the American Public* which claims "decades from now, vouchers will come to be an integral part of American education."

Moe's analysis is based on 4,700 in-depth telephone interviews conducted in 1995 that probed Americans' attitudes on public schools, private schools, and vouchers. He spent five years analyzing the data. His book concludes that vouchers will come about, through what he calls "normal politics"—that is, legislative action in the states.

### ***The long march towards privatization***

The battle over control of America's education system goes beyond the traditional federal vs. state/local government paradigm. The privatization factor, in fact, is "the center piece, the grand prize, of the right's overall agenda to dismantle social entitlements and government responsibility for social needs," says education consultant Ann Bastion, who also is Senior Program Officer at the liberal New World Foundation.

The Education Industry Group's Web site concurs: "Education is one of the hottest investment areas in the economy. Second only to health care as a percent of the GNP, education is being ramped up as the country moves toward greater private sector involvement in its delivery—from preschools to on the job training" (<http://www.eindustry.com>).

School voucher initiatives help power the drive towards privatization. Through vouchers, much of the \$650-plus billion-dollar public education "industry" could be open to private corporations—a notion that entrepreneurs and policy experts at conservative think tanks once only dreamed about.

For conservatives, the president's education package is a missed opportunity. However, high-stakes

standardized testing may pave the way to school vouchers and serve as a stalking horse for privatization.

As test results are gathered and analyzed, more and more under-funded public schools could be classified as "failing." It might become apparent that hiring tutors or moving to a better school is not a real option for most under-served children. This could trigger a renewed call for school vouchers—in essence a short, albeit formidable step towards privatization.

In the current climate of de-regulation, the role of the federal government will be dramatically reduced if the private sector takes over a big part of public education. (6)

### ***The federal role in education in the USA***

In the USA, the responsibility for education lies primarily with the states.

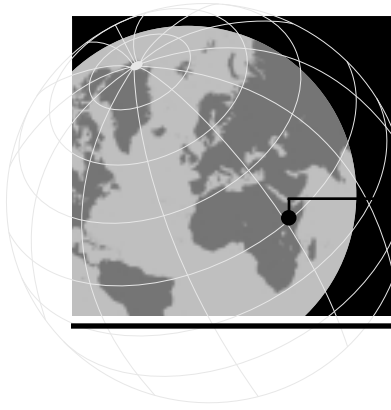
Over the years, the federal government's role in education has grown significantly, overcoming many obstacles set up mainly by conservatives concerned with maintaining the status quo, including racially segregated schools. It wasn't until 1965 when the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, engineered and signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, signalled that a sea change in education policy had taken place.

The Act ushered in an era of increased federal funding and involvement in many federally mandated education programs.

The U.S. Federal Department of Education became an independent entity only during President Jimmy Carter's administration in the 1970s.

Increasing the federal government's role in education has consistently been opposed by conservatives—an opposition that was reiterated by the Republican Party platform of 2000, which terms education "a state, local, and family responsibility, not a federal obligation."





# Ethiopia: the challenge of many nationalities

BY HASHIM TEWFIK MOHAMMED

**Ethiopia** is going through an arduous transition to democracy at the same time as it is attempting to put in place a kind of “ethnic federalism” that affords all regions and groups a measure of autonomy and real power.

Between 1976 and 1990 the country was nearly torn apart. The ruling junta of Col. Mengistu fought a series of regional wars against:

- the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front in Eritrea;
- the Tigray Liberation Front in the Tigray region;
- the Oromo Liberation Front in the Eastern Harargay and Wolega regions;
- the Afar Liberation Front in the Afar region;
- and the Western Somali and Ogaden Liberation Movements in the Ogaden region.

In May 1991 the Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Forces overthrew the dictatorship. Eritrea became independent (but only signed a peace treaty with Ethiopia in 2000) and the new Ethiopian government started down the road to a federal system based on ethnic regions.

## ***The road to a new constitution***

Its first step was to adopt a “Transitional Period Charter”, which was drafted by representatives of different “liberation movements”, ethnic groups, and prominent individuals.

This charter established a transitional period government that was composed of a Council of Representatives and Council of Ministers. The Council of Representatives was made up of the representatives of national (ethnic) liberation movements, other political

organizations and prominent individuals. It exercised legislative and supervisory functions.

In addition to reorganising the central government, the Charter contained two important measures. It provided for the promulgation of a law that would establish local and regional councils for local administrative purposes, defined on the basis of nationality, and it stated that the Council of Representatives would form the Constitutional Commission to draw up a draft constitution.

## ***Recognizing “nationalities”***

Fourteen “National/Regional Self-Governments” were established and sixty-five ethnic communities living in these regions were identified. Among the identified ethnic communities, forty-eight were entitled to establish their own self-governments at the Woreda—or district—level, while the remaining seventeen were considered minority nationalities and were only guaranteed “appropriate representation” in Woreda Councils.

The “Self-Governments” of neighbouring “nations, nationalities and peoples” were also authorised to enter into agreements to establish jointly a larger “Regional Self-Government” and set up other necessary intermediate units of self-government between the Woreda and the Regional levels. In the southern part of the country, five regions entered into just such an arrangement. They formed a single Southern Regional Self-Government wherein each ethno-linguistic community would retain its own local self-government and have representation at the Regional level.

As a result, the number of “National/Regional Self-Governments” decreased from fourteen to nine.

Legally, the Councils of the Regional Governments were not only accountable to the people of the regions that elected them but were also made responsible to the Council of Representatives of the Central Government. They were unable to carry out much of their allocated functions without the financial support of the Central Government.

The Self-Governments were vested powers within their geographic areas in all matters that were not expressly given to the Central Government.

Matters under the jurisdiction of the Central Government included defence, foreign affairs, fiscal and economic policy, citizenship, declaration of states of emergency and major communication networks.

The Self-Governments, on the other hand, were accorded broad power in such matters as language, culture, education, health, police and security, and social and economic development activities. They were also able to establish their own courts with jurisdiction to decide any dispute in their respective regions with the exception of those assigned to the courts of the Central Government.

After a four-year transitional period, the organization of state power on the basis of territorially based “ethnic communities” was reinforced and elevated to constitutional status.

## ***Ethnic identities in constitutional form***

The new federal constitution set up a two-chamber parliament at the federal level and one-chamber parliaments known as State Councils at the constituent-unit level. The federal parliament is composed of the House of Peoples’ Representatives and the House of Federation. The House of Peoples’

Representatives is the federal legislature. The House of Federation, which is “composed of representatives of nations, nationalities and peoples”, is the other federal representative assembly with specific powers, including the ultimate power “to interpret the constitution” and “to decide on issues relating to the rights of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples to self-determination, including the right to secession.”

The nine National/Regional self-governments, which were established during the transitional period, are incorporated into the new constitution and renamed as Regions that make up the Ethiopian Federation.

The federal constitution requires every member state to grant adequate power to local governments in order to encourage grassroots participation in political life. Plus it specifically obliges both the federal and member states to respect and ensure the rights of “nations, nationalities and peoples”.

Indeed, the Ethiopian constitution describes ethnic communities as being the essential constituent units of the federation. It starts out with the term “We, the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia...ratified the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia.” It defines these terms to mean “a group of people who have or share a large measure of common culture, or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, and who predominantly inhabit an identifiable contiguous territory.”

The Ethiopian federal political system created by this constitution is based upon the recognition of the right of ethnic communities to self-determination. This right has three component and interrelated aspects:

- the preservation and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity;
- the right of every ethnic community to political autonomy and participation in the federal decision-making process;
- and the right to secession.

The linguistic and cultural diversity aspect of the right of self-determination comprises the right of every ethnic community to use and develop its language, to express and promote its culture, and to preserve its history.

The autonomy and participation aspect of the right of self-determination entitles every ethnic community to self-government and to proportional representation in regional and federal government. This aspect of self-determination ensures the devolution of state power to ethno-territorial communities and is designed to make it difficult for all power to be concentrated in a small group. It is also aimed at developing a common identity and unity among ethnic communities.

The right to secession is the most complex and highly controversial part of the right of self-determination under the Ethiopian constitution. Some continue to argue vigorously against it on the ground that such a right is the exclusive right of nations under colonial domination and that its recognition could lead the country to fragmentation. Others hold that the constitutional recognition of the right to secession not only guarantees respect for

the rights of “nations, nationalities and peoples” but is also an affirmation of the “consensual” character of the federal union.

Ethiopia’s political history has proved that the unity of its many peoples can only be achieved through their mutual consent to live together to pursue their common interests. A unity that is based on the denial of the right of self-determination could not be maintained for long by coercion. Instead of bringing about real and viable unity, it would breed ethnic discontent, attempts at secession, and, ultimately, civil wars.

Ethiopia’s rejection of a resort to violence in order to secure the unity of its peoples and its attempts to bring about consensual unity by devolving political power to its constituent people are not just bold but courageous attempts to tame the centrifugal forces engulfing the country. 6

## History

Prior to the 1880s, what today is regarded as the territory of Ethiopia was inhabited by various peoples (cultural communities) whose respective indigenous political structures took such forms as fiefdoms, kingdoms, and egalitarian structures.

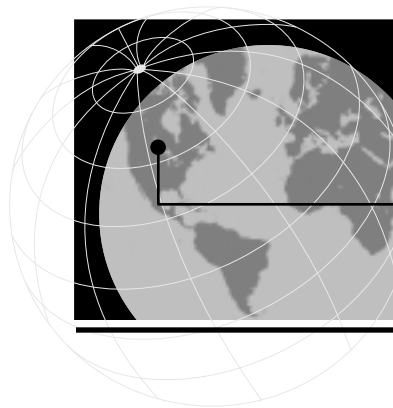
Following the imperial intrusion into the horn of Africa in the closing years of the 19th century, Emperor Menelik of the Amhara expanded the kingdom of Shawa, which was one of the loosely associated kingdoms of the Abyssinian empire. As a result of the successful conquests and expansions, the modern Ethiopian state was created and emerged as a unitary and centralized state

One major effect of the empire-building process was peoples’ dispossession from their land in the conquered regions. The new rulers took three quarters of the land, converting the former proprietors into tenants. The latter provided the labour that enriched the absentee landlords in Addis Ababa. This led to conflicts and antagonism between the tenants and the soldier-settlers in most of the south of the Empire.

The other serious consequence of the empire-building process was the imposition of the Amhara culture, language and religion, and the suppression of all others. Amharic was declared the national language of Ethiopia. No languages other than Amharic were allowed in schools, the press and government, and no religious festivities other than those sanctioned by the state were to be observed.

The demands of the various ethnic communities of Ethiopia for self-determination were brought to the forefront in the wake of the 1974 popular uprising that deposed the Emperor from his throne and enabled the military junta to come to power.

The junta could neither address nor handle the issue of self-governance. Rather, it exacerbated the problems by its persistent stubbornness, its refusal to compromise and its horrendous use of violence to curb such demands. Armed conflicts, civil strife, famine and economic deterioration devastated the country.



# Two new initiatives for reforming aboriginal governance in Canada

BY PAUL BARNESLEY

**There's** a battle going on in Canada. Only rarely does it make front-page news. It's not widely understood by the general public. But it's an all-out, high-stakes political fight that could change the face of the country forever.

Robert Nault, Canada's Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) minister, has announced that his department will seek to ready a *First Nations Governance Act* for passage into law by the autumn of 2002. A consultation process, to be unprecedented in scope, was announced by the minister on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

The consultations began on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Montreal Lake First Nation in Saskatchewan and are expected to continue across the country until October.

The consultations are directed at grassroots people, not the Native leaders. Nault has stated that the leaders are protective of their status and do not welcome any proposed changes that could erode their present power.

## **Native Leaders opposed**

The chiefs formally rejected the Nault initiative on May 10, 2001. That decision came after three days of debate during the spring *Confederacy of Nations*, a meeting of chiefs from across the country.

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come urged all First Nations people to boycott the consultation process. In response, Nault said he will go ahead with the consultation process and then frame the legislation, with or without the support of the chiefs.

The minister says the *Governance Act* is a necessary interim measure that's designed to plug holes in the *Indian Act*, the federal law that's been in place since 1876 and governs almost every aspect of

the lives of those Native people to whom it applies.

Everyone, including First Nation leaders, agrees that the *Indian Act* is inadequate. The powers of the "band council" are limited, incomplete, poorly supported by regulations and were not intended to be long term. The powers reserved for the minister and the federal cabinet are reminiscent of colonial times.

The *Indian Act* is under attack from every direction in more than 200 court cases. Nault believes it's better to come up with a clear plan to fix the Act, rather than waiting for the courts to re-create the relationship between the government and First Nations in a haphazard, isolated, case-by-case basis.

## **Disguised colonialism or democracy?**

The national chief admits that his people need to have better governance structures, but allowing the federal government to decide how they will be created is just repeating the original mistakes of colonialism.

"After all, it is the national organization that has worked over the years and knows what changes need to be made. What we're trying to do now is itemize some of that. So I feel that any effort by the minister will lead down a path of being rejected as not acceptable by the First Nations. But I do believe that First Nations want certain changes also," Coon Come said.

It appears that expensive, time consuming joint initiatives keep hitting the jurisdiction wall. The federal government won't give up the top rung on the ladder and First Nations insist on a nation-to-nation arrangement. The minister—completely unwilling or unable to give ground on

either point—appears to have grown impatient with the deadlock. He is bypassing the leaders and going to the First Nations people in the hope of moving the *Governance Act* forward.

Coon Come believes the minister should be dealing with him and should face the fact that the government is going to have to give a little to break the logjam. For the moment, the minister is only dealing with those First Nations that agree to buck Coon Come's call for a boycott of the consultations.

Nault was asked if the people can stop his process. "It's possible, if they make a legitimate argument," he said. "So far, I haven't heard any. But if people are going to fight about whether we should consult or not, I think that's pretty risky. That tells me that we've got some real serious problems out there. So far, what I've heard from the national chief and his vice-chiefs is: Give me more money. Show me more process. All these excuses."

## **New fiscal institutions: the way forward?**

One former chief has a few ideas that he thinks could fix a lot of the limitations of the *Indian Act*. Clarence "Manny" Jules, a long time chief of the Kamloops Indian Band in British Columbia, has pushed several controversial initiatives forward to the point where they are ready to go to Parliament.

He explained each of the four institutions that he would like to see created by the proposed Financial Institutions Act.

First, a statistical agency that compiles and analyzes economic information about First Nations is, he said, "absolutely critical to fiscal development."

Second, he would want the Act to create a national First Nations *tax commission* that could deal with First Nation taxation powers.

That issue scares many chiefs because their people have tax exempt status by virtue of Section 87 of the *Indian Act*. As a chief, Jules succeeded in taxing non-Native entities that operated on his traditional territory and he believes other First Nations can do the same.

"The Supreme Court of Canada recognizes that we have this (power), not only deriving from federal legislation, but inherently this is one of our powers."

The third institution, a First Nation *finance authority* will make it easier for First Nations to get access to capital, he said.


"Canada is one of the few countries, when it comes to dealing with First Nations, where all of the infrastructure

has to be dealt with in one fiscal year. We don't have the ability, as every other level of government does, to begin to develop bonds and debentures and get into the free market system," he said.

"We have to be able to pool our resources. Not only those that are involved in real property tax but those that have treaty land entitlements, treaty settlements and the like. And also, the billion dollars that the federal government spends on infrastructure—we should be able to lever that, turn it into a lot more resources for our communities and thereby build in the kinds of infrastructure that our communities sorely need."

The fourth institution would be a First Nations *financial management board*, a national institution that would set standards of financial management and assist and advise local institutions.

The federal government drafted the financial institutions legislation, working in tandem with the AFN. But neither the government nor the AFN has formally approved it. The minister has made the *Governance Act* the priority. But if the chiefs endorse either initiative, it will be the *Financial Institutions Act*.

It's still very early in the game and even experienced observers are not sure how this will end. Former Minister Ron Irwin tried to amend the *Indian Act* in 1996 and he was stopped—just barely—by the chiefs. Nault and his staff have undoubtedly learned from that experience—as have the chiefs. 

**Paul Barnsley** writes for Windspeaker—*Canada's National Native News Publication* ([www.ammsa.com/windspeaker](http://www.ammsa.com/windspeaker))

## History: First Nations and Canada

The first colonial law dealing with the subject of First Nations—*The Royal Proclamation of 1763*—recognized the indigenous peoples held title to their land. Treaties between the newcomers and the peoples already occupying the land were negotiated on a nation-to-nation basis.

Frequently, especially in the early days, the treaties were peace and friendship agreements proposed by the Crown because the settlers were small in number and living in a hostile environment, vulnerable to attack and utter destruction. Native leaders like to say that when their people had the upper hand, they behaved with honor and respected the newcomers. Now that it's the other way around, where Canada has the military might and financial clout to impose its will, the Native leaders say they expect the same honorable treatment in return.

When King George III issued the *Royal Proclamation* he recognized the existing sovereignty of the indigenous peoples in the "new world." Whether he knew it or not, that set the stage for centuries of struggle between theory and practice. The king decreed that settlers could not arbitrarily dispossess

the indigenous peoples of their land. Only representatives of the Crown, not individuals, could accept land surrenders from Native leaders in a formal process that the monarch ordered must be open, honorable and free from duress.

But North America was a long way from King George's court. Fraudulent land deals and dispossession by force may have violated the colonial law of the *Royal Proclamation*, but they happened all the same. Even in cases where surrenders followed the rules set down in the proclamation, the promises made were frequently broken.

To this day, land claims worth hundreds of millions of dollars—perhaps even billions—are being examined, negotiated or fought in the courts because of the illegal or negligent acts of pioneers.

The special status of Native people in Canadian law and public policy has been in place since before Canadian Confederation. The tax-exempt status recognized by Section 87 of the *Indian Act* is left over from the nation-to-nation relationship that existed in the

beginning. At that time, it was unthinkable that citizens of indigenous nations should be subject to the taxation of a foreign monarch.

As the settlers increased in number and pushed their way deeper and deeper into territories controlled by indigenous nations, making deals and promises along the way to acquire land, the nation-to-nation concept became a nuisance and was discarded, despite the protests of Native leaders. Later, when Native people sought to fight this point in the colonizers' courts, Canada enacted a law that made it illegal for a Native person to hire a lawyer.

When the remaining British North American colonies came together in Charlottetown in 1867 to create Canada, the discussion was already settled about who would control what. Native people were not invited to participate in those talks. In the British North America Act that emerged from those discussions, Section 91 (24) gave the responsibility "for Indians and lands reserved for Indians" to the federal government and not the provinces, another consequence of the nation-to-nation approach.



# the Practitioner's page

## Cesario Melantonio Neto of Brazil How to involve the states in foreign policy

*Until recently Cesario Melantonio Neto was the Director for Federal Relations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil. One innovative project he oversaw was to establish offices of the Foreign Ministry in the various regions of the country. Federations discussed this novel idea with him at the Forum of Federations' Conference on the Foreign Relations of Constituent Units, held in Winnipeg, Canada, from 10-13 May 2001.*

**Federations:** In Brazil, you have a very peculiar institution that may be unique in the world: you have "ambassadors" from the foreign service placed in the main regions of the country. Explain how that works.

**Melantonio:** Well, I do not know if it's the only country that has such a system, but we are proud of our system and consider it genuine federal diplomacy. We've been doing it now for four years and I think it will become a permanent practice. It is a channel of communication, an important one, between the ministry and civil society as well as the constituent units of the federation. So it has to do with democracy. Inside the country, it has to do with democracy and transparency in our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and it has most to do with a new form of culture inside our Ministry of Foreign Affairs. That is, trying to make our representatives abroad better

representatives through more contacts with the regions of our country.

**Take us back four years to when this idea started. What impelled the government of Brazil to think of trying this?**

I think it came from globalization, because with globalization the constituent units of the federation have a tendency—and it's perfectly natural—to develop more contacts abroad. And it's very important for a Minister of Foreign Affairs to know at least a little bit about the priorities of the country's regions. In such a big country it's impossible to know everything. We have almost 6,000 cities and 27 states, but at least we should know of the most important actions abroad of the constituent units of our federation.

Otherwise, since we are in the middle of the country in Brasilia—a kind of no-man's land lost in the middle of a big country—we could easily lose contact with the main regions of the country. We have ten big cities with more than one million inhabitants and a number of big states. The Foreign Ministry has to be sensitive to their concerns.

**Did the states originally petition the government of Brazil to consider such an idea?**

Yes. There was a double movement. There was a movement on our side:

we had the idea of creating a unit for coordination with the states' and cities' actions abroad. And we already had formal demands from some states to open a kind of office or representation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to advise them on their activities abroad, to organize missions, and to discuss international affairs. So it came from both sides.

**About the people who work in these offices—the Foreign Ministry's "ambassadors to the regions"—tell us what their work week involves, what they do from day to day.**

First, they are all senior diplomats who have already been posted abroad as ambassadors in at least two or three countries, so they have a lot of experience.

And they are a kind of diplomatic counsellor for the governor, the mayors of the state, and for the main officers in the states or cities that deal with foreign relations. They also try to be in contact with the business and academic communities that deal with foreign affairs. Then they are placed abroad again.

This is a very good experience—and a very good one for them. Instead of being posted in the ministry in the capital, they are posted in one of our states, and then they go back to embassies as former ambassadors. So this, speaking of personnel, of



human resources, is a kind of system for recycling senior officers inside the country rather than in the capital.

**Can you tell us a story about one particular state having a foreign relations problem which one of these “ambassadors” helped solve?**

Yes, I can speak of a very recent demand that concerns Canada, for instance.

We had here, a few days ago, a meeting to discuss the Summit of the Americas in Quebec—the Free Trade Zone of the Americas. We had a governor who informed our Minister of Foreign Affairs that he could not come to the Summit, but he would like very much to have his vice-governor participate as a member of the Brazilian delegation—this is an important agricultural state—to follow up on the discussions in Quebec City. Of course we accepted this governor’s demand.

It was very useful because now we have the vice-governor of this state very interested in the discussion on the Free Trade Zone of the Americas—and particularly the discussion on subsidies and barriers concerning agriculture, since most of the economy of this state is based on agriculture. And this state’s governor is a member of the opposition, so I must also stress that we in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—a technical ministry, let’s say—we do not get caught up in internal politics. We work with governors and mayors from the coalition of the present government or from the opposition all the same.

**Might we say that this program is intended in part to control the states’ activities, to delimit and define these activities and prevent them from destabilizing the foreign policy of Brazil by having too many independent positions? In what way is this sort of coherence part of the goal?**

I would say that our posture, our approach toward the union of the

federation since the beginning, is that we are not working on a basis of control and supervision. It wouldn’t work this way. We work on the basis of cooperation. They know very well that it’s not possible for a constituent unit of a federation to develop an independent foreign policy. And they know very well on the other side that our network abroad of around 150 posts is a very large one and very useful for them.

So we say that it’s more a matter of participation and cooperation, of information among the orders of the federation, than control. Control wouldn’t work in a federation because governors, being elected, are very strong political personalities in any federation and they wouldn’t accept such control.

**Do you think there are some lessons—not that it’s up to you or me to teach others lessons—but some lessons that other federations, even federations of countries of the North, might learn from the Brazilian example?**

Well, we’ve discussed our experiences with other federations before the creation of the Forum of Federations. That means we’ve been contacted by other federal countries, through their embassies in Brazil, to discuss our experiences.

I would say that this kind of experience is particularly important for continental countries, for big countries, because of course if you are in a smaller country that is a federation it’s easier to move from the capital to other main cities of your country. But in big countries like Canada, Brazil, United States, Australia, China, India, Russia—a diplomat in Ottawa or in Brasilia, in Peking, Moscow, or Canberra is far away from most of the big cities of his own country. I think that this system of internal ambassadors is very important to keep the Minister of Foreign Affairs informed on internal affairs, but internal affairs of course that have a link with external affairs.

And I think this is a matter of changing the culture of the diplomat. The diplomat must no longer be concerned—during this period of globalization and information technology—solely with foreign policy. He must deal a little bit more with internal politics. When I say internal politics I mean to have a better familiarity with what the constituent units of our federation are doing on the political, economic and cultural side abroad.

**As we have heard at this conference, in many countries—again, in particular in the North—constituent units have started to play a very formal and active role in foreign affairs to the point where some constituent units actually have a larger foreign service of their own than many sovereign countries. Do you think that in those countries there must be some kind of coordination between the foreign service operations of the constituent units and of the federal government? How do you think that could work?**

I think each case is a case unto itself, because, as I’ve learned through the Forum of Federations, problems inside federations are terribly different. We have a lot of problems in our federation, but they are mostly fiscal problems, dealing with fiscal federalism and dealing with regional inequalities. But we don’t have fractures in our federation concerning religion, ethnic problems and linguistic problems because we have only one language. Most of the people have the same religion. So, fortunately for Brazil, we see that the political and economic forces inside the federation do not deal so much with religious and ethnic fractures, which are perhaps the most difficult problems to solve inside a federation. So I think that to transfer experiences from our federation to another is very difficult. You can try sharing similar experiences, but no one has exactly the same experience. (6)