

Porfirio Diaz was President during most of the subsequent period until 1910.

Mexico's drastic social and economic problems finally erupted in the Revolution of 1910. Prominent leaders in this revolution - some were rivals for power - were Francisco I. Madero, Venustiano Carranza, Pancho Villa, and Emiliano Zapata. Under the aegis of President Carranza the Constitution of 1917 was passed - and is still in effect. It was Plutarco Elias Calles, who on stepping down from the Presidency in 1928 virtually decreed into existence the Revolutionary Party which (under various names - first the National Revolutionary Party, Mexican Revolutionary Party and now the Institutional Revolutionary Party PRI) has ruled Mexico without interruption since 1929.

Government

The Constitution of 1917 provides for a federal republic with a separation of powers into independent executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. Mexico has 31 States and a Federal District. Each State is headed by an elected Governor. Powers not expressly vested in the Federal Government are reserved to the States; the States' powers are much less extensive than are those of Canadian Provinces.

The executive branch is dominant. Executive power is vested in the President who promulgates and executes the laws of the Congress and, by delegation from the Congress, legislates by executive decree in certain economic and financial fields. He is elected by universal adult suffrage for a six-year term and may not hold office a second time. There is no Vice-President; in case of the removal or death of the President, a provisional president is elected by the Senate. The current President of Mexico or, more correctly, of the United Mexican States, Carlos Salinas de Gortari was inaugurated on December 1, 1988.

Congress is composed of a Chamber of Senators and a Chamber of Deputies. Consecutive re-election to the Congress is prohibited. Sixty-four Senators (two from each State and the Federal District) are elected to six-year terms. The Chamber of Deputies has 300 members elected by majority vote in single-member constituencies and 200 seats are shared among opposition parties on the basis of proportional representation. Deputies serve three year terms.

The July, 1988, Presidential election resulted in victory for Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the former Secretary of Programming and Budget. The election results represented a radical departure from the uncontested political dominance exercised by the PRI during its 59 continuous years in power.