

relations. If some countries do not possess the technical capacity or resources to communicate with others as equals, they will be at a severe disadvantage in projecting their concerns on the international stage.

The term "cornerstone" also suggests a sense of tradition since the inscription on the cornerstone marks a specific point in time. International communications, however, is now in the process of turning a corner. Communications relationships among countries are now in a state of transition: between developed countries; between developed and developing countries (that is, the North-South dimension), and between countries with open as compared to controlled media (that is, the East-West dimension). These relationships are seeking a new equilibrium as governments wake up to the fact that information means not just political power but economic power, and even raises the fundamental issue of cultural domination.

#### National and international policies

Having defined my terms, I would now like to pose the question: What is the relationship between a country's national and international communications policies in a technological era when communications are, by their very nature, more and more international. National and international communications policies are, in my view, two sides of the same coin. In Canada's case, there are certain interests which must be safeguarded or promoted internationally — for example, we must export our communications high technology for our domestic industry to prosper. And there are certain international developments and realities that must be reflected in domestic policies — for example, we must stimulate the promotion of television programs that Canadians, faced with so many U.S. programs, will watch.

There are governments who still wish to restrict communications to within their national borders, but they are doomed to failure. The web of telecommunications facilities connecting countries has become an everyday reality. Various means of transmission are in constant use across borders, ranging from: "off air" transmission of broadcasting signals; to transmission through wires, microwave, coaxial cable and, soon, fibre optics; to transmission *via* satellites from outer space which, according to the 1967 United Nations Outer Space Treaty, is "the province of all mankind". Last October, at a symposium at the McGill Centre for Research of Air and Space Law, I suggested that the province of all mankind would be an intriguing concept to introduce to our constitutional talks.

More and more specialized services are being transmitted as the technology advances. From telegraph, telephone and traditional broadcasting services, we have developed to the point where broadcasting services can be transmitted directly from satellites to small home receivers in rural and remote areas, and where sophisticated new data and informatic services are now possible due to a combination of communications and computer technologies. A world-wide communications infrastructure that transcends all national boundaries is well on its way to being set up.

#### Government involvement

What is the proper role for government with respect to the flow of information? With so much essential information flowing across borders, it is now true to say that governments block this flow at their own peril. Truly democratic governments have a legitimate, regulatory role to play in deciding what means of carriage or transmission