

Splintered Canada: a model for Australia

An agreement was concluded in 1993 by the Canadian government and the Inuit people of Canada's Northwest Territory, to give the Inuits self-government over a vast tract comprising 20% of all of Canada. Some 17,500 Inuits were given 700,000 square kilometers of land and 800,000 square kilometers of ocean. At the stroke of a pen, a new "nation"—Nunavut—was carved out of Canada. After a transition period, this "new nation" will begin officially governing itself in 1999.

Canada has established the "indigenous" precedent to split up a modern nation-state. This model is now being proposed for Australia, as well as for Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, and the United States—all targets of indigenous organizations such as Prince Philip's "Inuit Circumpolar Conference," a group set up to demand autonomy for Inuits in any nation in which they reside.

As one of the chief architects of "Nunavut," former Canadian civil servant Peter Jull summarized the effects of over

two decades of "indigenous struggles" for Canada in a May 1992 paper: "The collapse in June 1990 of the 1987 Meech Lake constitutional accord agreed by prime minister and premiers precipitated a national crisis in Canada. The crisis still rages and *could lead to the dissolution of the country in the near future*" (emphasis added).

In 1953, one year after Elizabeth II's inauguration as sovereign of Canada as well as Great Britain, Her Majesty's Canadian government began a hideous "experiment" of forced deportation of Inuit (Eskimo) families from Quebec into the High Arctic. In part, the experiment was to secure Canada's claims to the area in the face of an expanding American military presence.

But the truly evil aspect of the relocation was that it set up the Canadian equivalent of Bantustans; in the words of a 1994 Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report, the plan was "to restore the Inuit to what was considered their proper state" (see *EIR*, Nov. 11, 1994). No assistance was to be given to the Inuit, since they were "there to rehabilitate themselves . . . to learn how to survive on their own and go back to their old way of living. The project was to see if they could survive in that High Arctic environment where Inuit had lived in earlier times. . . . Temperatures of -55°F were common in winter."

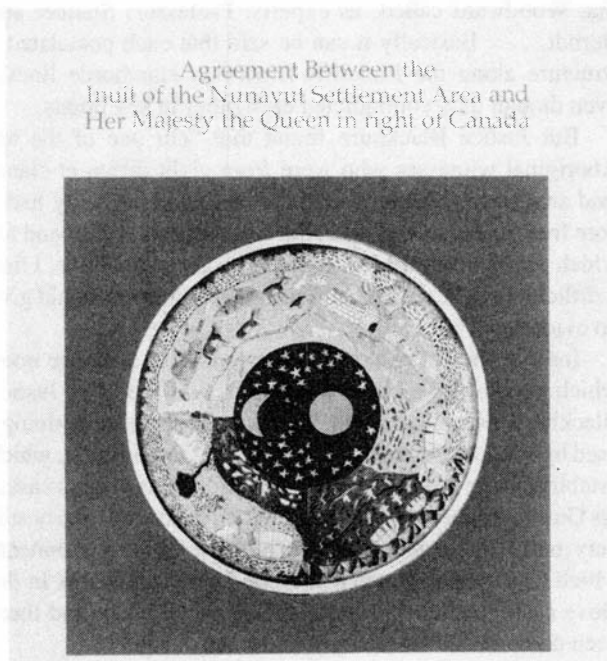
Crown officials responsible for the project, the report documented, were disturbed that the Inuits were becoming "assimilated" into modern society, and losing their "indigenous" character.

Twenty years later, in the early 1970s, the Inuits were to be guinea pigs in another of Her Majesty's experiments: They were to be used to split Canada into pieces. This followed a Supreme Court of Canada decision in 1973 which overturned all precedent, ruling in the case of the Nisga'a Indians in British Columbia, that any "indigenous peoples" who had not signed a treaty with the Crown could now do so, that they had valid claims to their "traditional lands."

This decision opened vast tracts of the country to claims of "indigenous ownership" by Inuits, Cree, Metis, Dene, and other "first peoples" (see **Figure 2**). The famous "Mabo" decision in Australia in 1992 had the same effect: Australia's High Court rendered a verdict in the case of Eddie Mabo, a radical leftist Aboriginal, which recognized "the entitlements of the indigenous inhabitants, in accordance with their laws and customs, to their traditional lands."

The Canadian government attempted to settle land claims by agreements involving wildlife harvesting, land ownership, and natural resource management, with substantial financial payments and the establishment of various "homelands." In return, the land would be formally owned by the state (i.e., the Crown).

But a new chapter opened in 1982, when Canada's Constitution was amended based on a "Charter of Rights and Freedoms" drafted in Great Britain. Clause 35 of the new Constitution was taken from that Charter: "1) The existing



The cover of the 282-page treaty between Queen Elizabeth II and the Inuits, which carved the "nation" of Nunavut out of Canada.

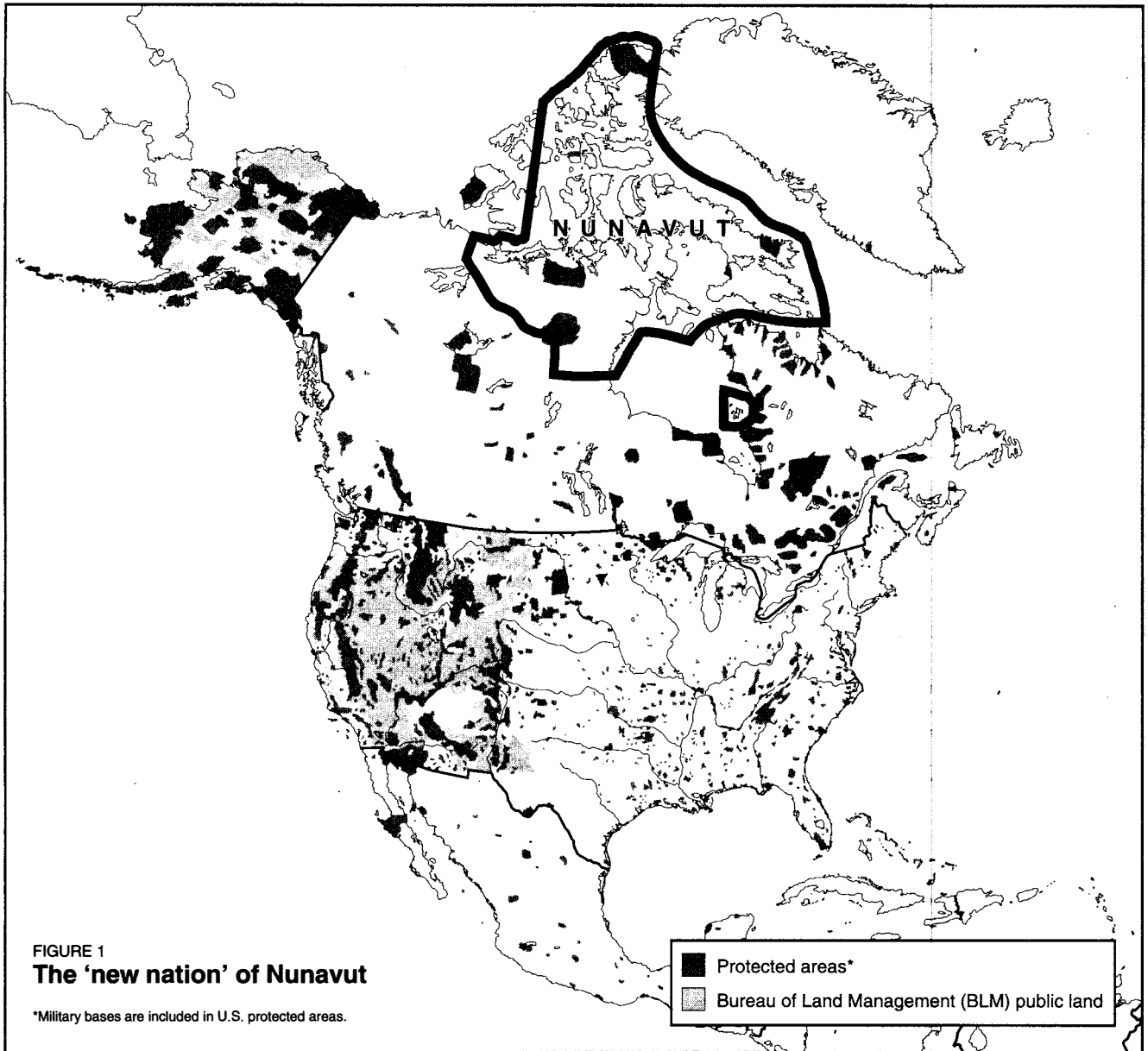


FIGURE 1
The 'new nation' of Nunavut

*Military bases are included in U.S. protected areas.

The two areas outlined in bold comprise the new "self-governing" entity of Nunavut, as negotiated by the "Agreement Between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada," signed in 1993. One-fifth of all Canada was carved out and handed over to 17,500 "indigenous" Inuits (Eskimos). This is the model for the "regional agreements" for "self-governing" enclaves now being organized all over Australia. The "protected areas" (shaded) show land taken out of use by Prince Philip's WWF and associated organizations.

Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed." Now, Aboriginal rights, including Aboriginal ownership of land, were to be guaranteed by the Constitution.

As Jull noted, "Section 35 led in 1990 to a major decision, *Sparrow*, in Canada's highest court, providing a strong legal basis for the protection of Aboriginal rights, *even against the government*" (emphasis added).

Nunavut comes to Australia

Jull was the adviser on the Constitution in the Prime Minister's Department in Ottawa, Canada; beginning in 1980, he worked in Aboriginal delegations in Canada's constitutional reform processes and as research director of the Nunavut Constitutional Forum, which carved "Nunavut" out of Canada. He then moved to Australia and took up a post at Nugget Coombs's North Australia Research Unit (NARU)

FIGURE 2
Canada—'indigenous' land claims



The areas outlined in bold show territory over which "indigenous" claims have been granted, or where agreements in principle for such claims exist. In addition to the Inuits' control over Nunavut, these include claims by the Dene, Metis, Cree, and Inuvialuit, among others. By the same 1973 Supreme Court decision that made the creation of Nunavut possible, the entire state of British Columbia is up for claim, as is much of Quebec.

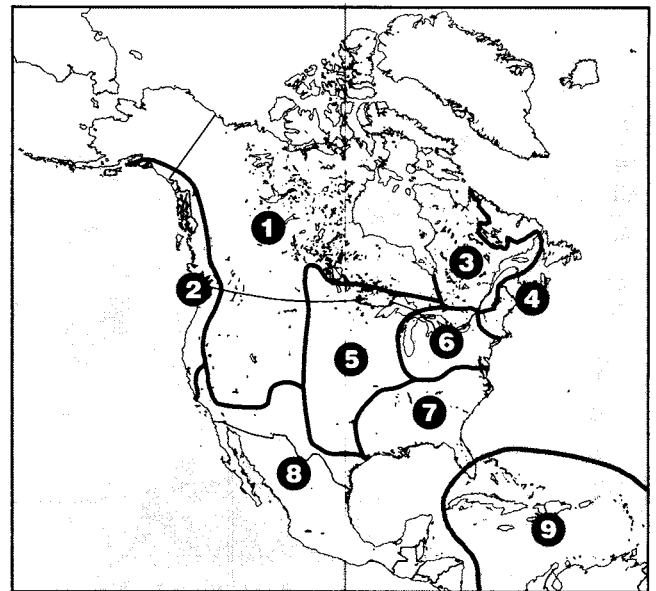
in the Northern Territory.

His comments below are taken from two papers published by NARU in 1992, "The Constitutional Culture of Nationhood, Northern Territories, and Indigenous Peoples," and "A Guide for Australian Research Into Northern Regions and Indigenous Policy in North America and Europe."

Jull argues that Australia is "behind the times" in indigenous rights, but can catch up quickly by linking up with indigenous activists around the world: "The fact that other peoples and other governments have been able to find ways for indigenous peoples to regain control of their lives, communities and territories means that it can be done in Australia."

The world's northern regions all have made bold strides toward "self-government": "The north circumpolar OECD countries discussed here, plus today's more open Soviet/Russian entity, have not only been developing their indigenous and northern region policies longer and working through policy debates which are only now building up in Australia, but they are accelerating the pace through international cooperation and comparative study. It is desirable for Australians to plug themselves into these networks which

FIGURE 3
The 'nine nations of North America'



This map shows a proposal put forward by Joel Garreau in *The Nine Nations of North America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1981). Garreau and other WWF co-thinkers have called for splitting up nation-states such as the United States and Canada. His nation number 1, "The Empty Quarter," has largely been created. Note how the "indigenous" land claims from Figure 2 correlate with the "protected areas" of the western United States in Figure 1, where economic activity is being shut down under environmentalist pretexts, to produce "The Empty Quarter" of Figure 3. Although Garreau's nation number 3, Quebec, is close to being formed by Quebec leaving Canada, it will in turn be further splintered by land claims of the Inuit and Cree.

are increasingly important in setting global indigenous and environmental agendas."

One way to achieve "indigenous autonomy" is to rewrite the Australian Constitution along the Canadian model: "The opportunities which face Australians and their Constitutional Centenary Foundation over the next decade in reviewing and renewing constitutional arrangements have many striking parallels in Canadian work going on since the late 1970s. National and northern territory reforms in Canada provide specific precedents and some warnings for Australian constitutional reform. In both countries the inclusion of the indigenous peoples is a critical test of the efficacy and authenticity of constitutional reform."

There will be consequences if such "reform" is not carried out, Jull threatens: "If such progress is *not* made, growing portions of the Australian public and considerable world opinion will view constitutional reform as inauthentic and incomplete. Platitudes about Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders being here first will not suffice" (emphasis in original).