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ROUND TABLE: CANADA'S KANANASKIS G8 SUMMIT: WHAT CAN AND SHOULD BE DONE?

FIRST ROUND DISCUSSION

MODERATOR: JOHN KIRTON*

Introduction

From June 26-28, 2002, Canada will be hosting, for the fourth time, the annual summit of the Group of Seven (and now eight) major market democracies -France, the United States, Britain, Germany, Japan, Italy, Canada, and Russia, with the European Union. This year there is much more skepticism and uncertainty than usual about what the G7 and G8 summit can and should do. There has long been deep doubt about what this small, exclusive, self-selected group of powerful democracies can accomplish, in a two or three day meeting, to effect change within their own complex societies and throughout the diverse global community outside. Many critics charge that such summits are little more than global "hot tub parties" or "photo-ops," at which political leaders gather to sophomorically discuss current events, issue opaque pre-scripted communiqués, and undemocratically and secretly decide what international organizations and countries not represented at the summit must do. The G7/8's defenders retort that it is good for leaders to meet and talk so as to avoid misunderstanding and learn from one another, develop consensus on innovative directions in response to new problems, reach timely well-tailored, ambitious decisions address pressing issues, and provide effective global governance where the 1945 United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions have failed. Whatever the desirability of such G8 governance, the record reveals that since Canada last hosted the summit at Halifax in 1995, the current wave of post-Cold War globalization has led the G8 consistently to take up an agenda, make decisions and deliver implementing actions on a far more ambitious and consequential scale than ever before.

If G8 governance has flourished in the twenty-first century, so has opposition to it. In a world of rapidly intensifying globalization, where governments' control over global markets and transnational corporations has been reduced or altered, the G8 is seen as the strategic center for imposing a neo-liberal "Washington consensus" on poor peoples and the public goods on which they depend. In a world where power is flowing to emerging markets and where the voices and violence of the dispossessed are proliferating, centering global governance in a rich, largely white, northern plutocratic club closed to developing countries seems to defy basic principles of legitimacy and democracy. And at a time when the G8 is intruding into such long domestic issues as health, education, aging, pensions, social policy and cultural diversity, and thus becoming an effective global center of domestic governance, citizens and their civil society organizations in all the G8 democracies are demanding that the process be opened up so that they might be let in.

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Those close to the G8 summit claim that many moves in these directions have already been made. The 1999 Cologne summit set forth a new vision of socially sensitive and sustainable globalization in which the claims of the poor, socially excluded, and natural environment had a more equal place. As long ago as 1989 and especially since 1996, development concerns have dominated the G7/8 agenda and the leaders of major developing countries and the central multilateral organizations they populate have come to the summits to work together with G8 leaders to build a more prosperous and just world. And innovative steps have been taken to move beyond big business, labour and agricultural lobbying and outside protesting, to bring responsible civil society representatives into the summit preparations and processes in an influential way.

Still, G8 governance, with the summit at its center, is now in crisis. The outburst of protest, violence, death and terrorist threats at the July 2001 Genoa summit has called into question the very legitimacy and value of the summit within its member democracies and indeed, among some of the leaders themselves. The September 11 terrorist attacks on America, from the same Al-Qaeda network that has been targeting the summits for many years, have reinforced these doubts and the desire to hold the 2002 summit as a closed retreat in a remote location, cut off from citizens and their cacophony of voices outside. At the same time, the continuing need to combat terrorism, generate global growth in the wake of the first synchronous global slowdown since the summit began in 1975, and respond to African leaders' pleas for a new partnership to reduce poverty has made Kananaskis one of the most high stakes, potentially productive, summit in several years.

As the Kananaskis summit approaches, it is thus important to address several fundamental questions about G7/8 summitry:

1. Of what value has the G7/8 summit been in recent years? How best can one measure its success? How does its recent performance compare with that since its inception in 1975.
2. What makes a summit successful? What are the key causes of effective G7/8 performance?
3. How well has the G7/8 moved to meaningfully involve outside countries, international organizations, and civil society organizations in its summit in recent years? What further innovations are needed?

To answer these questions, this roundtable has assembled several veteran observers and practitioners of the G7/G8. Robert Fauver, of Fauver Associates in the United States, has been involved in G7/8 summitry since its inception, served as President Clinton's first personal representative or "sherpa" for the G7 summit, and helped invent the sister summit of the APEC leaders meeting in 1993. Sir Nicholas Bayne, of the London School of Economics and Political Science, has equally long exposure to summitry, diplomatic experience in Africa, in Paris at the OECD and in Canada, is co-author of the master work on summitry—*Hanging Together*—and has co-authored its 1990's sequel—*Hanging in There*. Dr. Gordon Smith, one of Canada's most distinguished diplomats, was Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's sherpa at the first summit he hosted, served in this capacity for the 1996 and 1997 summits, and is now Director of the Centre for Global Studies at the University of Victoria and a Senior Fellow at the Liu Centre at the University of British Columbia on Canada's Pacific coast. And Professor Gerald Helleiner, of the University of Toronto's Munk Center for International Studies,

has long led thinking about global development, in international fora, Canadian development research centers and NGO's and in the scholarly world.

Robert Fauver*

The economic summit process has developed a set of critics and defenders over the years since its inception in 1975. The results coming out of the summit process have had their share of ebbs and flows. Some years, the communiqués have been sharply drafted and focused clearly on substantive issues of the day. In these cases, there have been concrete results from the summit process, either in terms of new policy decisions or clear tasking to various ministries in the participating nations. In other years, the summit communiqués have wandered around a wide variety of topics often serving up platitudes and offering little new in the way of decisions or policy guidance for ministries.

Prior to the first economic summit, leaders of the major economies of the world never met collectively, beyond bilateral encounters, to consider the key political economy issues of the day. It took the abandonment of fixed exchange rates and the redrafting of the Article of Agreements of the International Monetary Fund in the wake of the first oil shock to catalyze the first meeting. The system needed leadership and direction. Finance ministries in the G-5 nations (France, Germany, Japan, the UK, and the U.S.), working closely with the IMF, set forth the first ever revision of the Bretton Woods agreements that had directed the global international monetary system since the end of World War II. It was decided that the leaders of the G-5 should get together and lend their political weight to the redrafting of the Articles of Agreement. Thus the summit process began on a strong substantive issue with a clear direction for policy decisions and the future movement of the key international monetary institution, the International Monetary Fund.

The summit process has wandered significantly from its original function as a political economy based forum. In part, the process has evolved with changing issues that require leaders' attention. In part, the process shifted towards more geopolitical and strategic issues that were relevant at the time of summit meetings. In part, the summit process has not had the substantive leadership from leaders' personal representatives or "sherpas" in some years required to drive the issues towards leaders' plates for the meetings. In the early years Finance Ministries stood supreme. Over time, the role of Finance Ministries has declined in relative terms and the role of Foreign Ministries has risen. This has resulted in a rather natural shift in the focus of discussions and the drafting of the communiqué to include an ever-wider variety of topics.

Without a strong, focused sherpa process (especially from the host country) the communiqué drafting process becomes one of inclusion rather than exclusion. Its focus becomes more diluted and diverse. The number of topics covered rises and the 'leadership' level of issues is forgotten. A personal rule of thumb says the 'quality of the communiqué is inversely related to its length.' In my experience, the longer the communiqué, the less real substance it contains. Longer communiqués generally mean that the process was not well focused and that the issues covered represent more of a grab bag or shopping list of topics, and that the communiqué does not reflect the actual discussions held by the leaders. Thus the first measure of success is to look at the length of the communiqué. The longer the communiqué (and the more bureaucratic its language) the less substantive and less successful the summit was.

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The summit process has declined in value over the past several years. While some very useful changes in the summits themselves have been instituted, the results are less tangible than in earlier decades. The exclusion of finance and foreign ministers from the actual summit has helped streamline the summits. The approach of holding finance and foreign ministerial meetings prior to the summit has helped the process and should be maintained.

The second yardstick for measuring success should be whether or not leaders take clear decisions that change existing policies. Are the leaders providing new guidance to Ministries for their ongoing policy work or are they merely ratifying existing policy decisions? A successful summit provides new guidance for policy makers. Often communiqués simply rehash existing policy frameworks. While there may be a rare occasion when it is useful to restate leaders' commitment to existing policies, it should be seen as the exception rather than the rule.

A third yardstick for measuring success should be a review of the current 'hot' issues of the day and a determination of whether the communiqué has addressed these key topics. Often communiqués do not cover some of the most important economic issues of the day. While all key issues need not be included, clearly the vast majority of the difficult issues of the day need to be addressed in one way or the other.

A corollary of the third yardstick relates to whether or not longer-term issues are covered by leaders. Political leaders, by definition, tend to focus on today's issue and to ignore tomorrow's key problems. For example, for a decade it has been known that aging populations are expected for all of the major economies participating in the summit. Little attention has been given to this major upcoming problem.

Lastly, success can also be obtained through the exchanges of leaders that do not appear in the communiqué. The meeting itself has value as an opportunity for leaders to meet, develop informal relationships, take stock of each other, and just simply spend time together. Even in today's world of high-tech communication, it can be valuable for leaders to spend time over two days together, eat together and relax together. Personal relationships still count. This is a hard yardstick to use. It requires considerable discussions with key personnel who are well-informed of their leaders' views of the meetings themselves.

A successful summit passes the yardsticks outlined above. First and foremost, success requires that leaders make clear policy related decisions that change the focus or direction of existing or future political economy policies. The communiqué must set out new directions for the economic policies of the countries present at the summit or for the international institutions that are largely controlled by or led by the summit members. Historically, the key referent has been the macroeconomic or exchange rate policy decisions reached by the leaders. Economic policy coordination and/or cooperation have been a major dimension. In some years, leaders commit to new monetary or fiscal policies, which are aimed at strengthening the economic situation and outlook in member countries. When policies are coordinated, they become stronger than when they are undertaken unilaterally or individually. The combined effects of joint policy actions tend to impress financial markets more than the same policies adopted individually. Markets respond positively when leaders are working together towards the same goals.

Success can be enhanced if leaders focus on future key policy issues and set out a roadmap for future discussions or actions. If the public sees that leaders anticipate future

problems through these meetings, they will tend to be more supportive of the summit. Had leaders begun to address the upcoming problems associated with aging societies they would have had more credibility in recent years. The issues in Europe, for example, of under funded pensions schemes is also shared in Japan and in some corporations within the U.S

Furthermore, the public must believe that the meetings were successful. Thus media coverage of the summit should focus on the key decisions made by leaders. One way to help insure success of a summit is to present careful, detailed materials to the media corps during the meetings so that they can file accurate and detailed stories on the substantive results. Periodic briefings of the media during the meetings are also critical. Briefings can help the media understand the 'soft' side of the meetings. If a part of the summit's value comes from the informality of the meetings and the chance for leaders to chat informally, then the briefings must convey that information to the media.

The single most important factor contributing to an effective summit performance is the sherpa process. The choice of individual sherpas is made by Heads of State/Government, but their interaction, their access to their own leader, their familiarity with the substantive topics on the agenda, and their own styles are critical to the preparatory process which underlies all of the summits. Here the choice of the host sherpa is critical. I have witnessed the host sherpa take over the preparatory process and drive the discussions to reach key decisions that set up the agenda for leaders. Conversely I have witnessed the host sherpa lose control of the process—or worse not have a clear view of where he wants to move the process. The sherpa process needs to be done in a spirit of cooperation and camaraderie. The preparatory meetings need to reflect a joint commitment of the sherpas to a successful, substantive summit. They need to know when to compromise and when to highlight real policy differences for their leaders. In the end, if the preparatory process is not successful in weeding out topics and focusing the agenda on the critical issues that truly call for leaders input, then the summit will not be successful. The sherpa process needs to limit the number of issues for leaders' discussion if they are to hold substantive talks on the topics. Too long a list of topics means that precious little time is available for discussions and leaders will tend to follow 'talking points' rather than truly engage in discussion. Sherpas can and should shift many of the recommended topics to the Foreign and Finance Ministers for resolution and discussion. They should jealously guard the list of topics for leaders. Since spontaneity is important to the success of the meetings—leaders must be able to include new hot topics at the last minute—there must be extra time built into the schedule for potential new issues, which require discussion.

The second cause of an effective summit is the leaders themselves. Some leaders enjoy the give and take of the discussions and some do not. I have seen summits where it was clear that the leaders would rather be elsewhere. I have also seen summits where the leaders clearly enjoyed the event. While outside of the control of any of the preparatory processes, it is important that the leaders enjoy themselves and the forum. Perhaps Sherpas can help the process by spending considerable time briefing their individual leaders on the meetings and the setting so that the leaders become comfortable with the event. Language barriers sometimes hurt the process, but often I have seen that even through translators two leaders have been able to bond.

How well has the G-7/8 moved to meaningfully involve outside countries, international organizations, and civil society organizations in its summits? This has been, and still is, one of the most difficult questions facing the summit process in recent years, and indeed, since the beginning of the summit process in 1975. It rests heavily on the most fundamental question of all: What is the purpose of summits? There are two fundamentally different answers to this question.

The first is that summits were designed for the seven major industrial countries to have an opportunity to develop coordinated policy responses to the key economic and financial issues in their economies and in the global economy. It was a unique forum for the leading industrial nations to share approaches and policy information, to share analysis of the key issues, and to propose and adopt or reject policy solutions. First and foremost, the focus was on the key industrial nations' macro economic policies and the coordination of their approaches to domestic economic issues in order to minimize the international effects of those domestic approaches. From time to time they also discussed coordinated approaches to international financial institutions, as they were the key creditor countries for those institutions. It was assumed that each representative to the process—either at sherpa level, sous-sherpa level, or the leaders themselves, would be in touch with their own domestic political communities (NGOs and the like).

The second answer to the question argues that summits are part of a global "directoire," which aims to provide leadership on global issues. As such the views of non-elected groups (NGOs), developing nations, international organizations, labor, business, and other 'non-represented' groups should be included directly into the summit process.

I take the opposite view. With the inclusion of Russia, the summits are dangerously close to being too large now to be an effective forum for frank exchanges of ideas and opinions. Formal inclusion of new groups—whatever their claim might be—runs the risk of further weakening the summit's usefulness as a place where real exchange of ideas occurs.

It is instead incumbent on the summit members individually to solicit the views of their own broad constituencies and to decide for themselves how to best carry (or not carry) their views to the other participants. Each leader has his/her own political calculation to make regarding the value of the civil society participants in their policy process. Since the civil society organizations are not elected bodies representing citizens, but rather self-appointed, they should have no role in the formal meetings themselves. Their lack of accountability (and responsibility) makes them subject to taking non-compromising positions, which have little regard for other constituents in the economy. While they should be heard at the national level in the summit countries, they should not be a part of the international meetings themselves.

International organizations should be called upon to join the summit process for those specific sections of the discussions that leaders decide would benefit from the international organizations' participation. But the heads of these organizations do not (or should not) offer their own views to leaders since, after all, they represent their members not themselves. At the sherpa level, contact should be encouraged between individual sherpas and these international organizations for their technical input.

Summit membership should not be opened to new countries. New members would bring the summit closer to the UN in membership and thereby duplicate a well-

established body and organization. One could argue for the inclusion of China, Brazil, and India to increase the profile and representation of the developing nations. But many emerging market economies would argue that none of these three have successfully developed and should not be given a role in decisions, which affect the real developing countries. Clearly both China and India have a way to go toward private market development.

One might argue for fewer members. Indeed, the role of the EU has grown to the point where it might well replace the individual European members. The new group would be, Canada, Japan, the EU, the U.S., and Russia. And if the group is theoretically composed of the key industrial nations, one could argue for the removal of Russia from the body. The size of the table would then be smaller and more conducive to informal exchanges.

Holding a meeting as “a closed mountaintop retreat” should not be interpreted to mean that leaders will ignore those not at the table. In fact, political leaders make policy decisions all the time in small groups at home. They do not hold policy meetings in public as they have all learned that frank and open exchanges of ideas lead to the best decisions and that the glare of publicity does not usually help the final decision process. But they do, to one degree or another, consult with interest groups prior to the final decision meetings. This model is the correct one for a summit. Each leader must consult with various interest groups prior to attending the summit. He/she must be well informed of the views and suggestions of interest groups, but the leaders must be able to make their final decision in private consultations among themselves. If, for example, the leaders believe that free trade is good, and they are willing to stake their political futures on that position, why should the views of un-elected protectionist or no-growth groups be forced on the summit process?

The host country should inform participants that it expects the leaders will come to Canada informed by their citizenry, civil societies, unions, business, and other relevant parts of their country, and that the leaders have a responsibility to consult in advance with key developing nation leaders. But it should then ensure that the meetings will be closed to outsiders and that individual participants will provide post-meeting debriefings.

Nicholas Bayne*

The objectives of G7/G8 summits remain the same as always. These are: providing political leadership that goes further than bureaucrats can; reconciling the tensions of globalisation between domestic and international pressures; and creating collective leadership, to replace American hegemony.

The value of recent summits should be judged against the results achieved in these three areas, as follows. In regard to political leadership, the practice established since Birmingham 1998, whereby the heads of state and government meet on their own, has given them greater freedom of action. This is reflected in a range of summit innovations—on debt relief, the digital divide, infectious diseases and help for Africa. Summits have also resolved issues through the heads’ personal intervention, for example, from Yeltsin over Kosovo at Cologne 1999. But summitry has not gone back to a state of

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original simplicity. The heads now preside over a G7/G8 network of daunting complexity.

In regard to reconciling domestic and international pressures, recent summits have focused on the problems of managing globalisation. Attention has steadily shifted from issues with a domestic focus, like employment and crime, to the problem of world poverty. The summits have corrected their early neglect of these issues and set some valuable targets, but they still fall short in implementation.

In regard to collective management, the source of summit initiatives is now much more widely spread. The United States still leads on financial issues, while the Europeans are the protagonists for the environment. Japan, especially at Okinawa 2000, and Canada also contribute ideas. But recent summits have found it hard to resolve transatlantic differences, for example on a new trade round and on climate change. The great test for Kananaskis 2002 will be to bring the United States and its partners closer together.

The G7/G8 summits of today compare well with most of their predecessors. None have reached the heights of Rambouillet 1975 or Bonn I 1978. But the summits since Birmingham 1998 show consistent, steady performance.

There are four keys to summit success: agenda setting; preparation; the heads' personal contribution; and implementation. In regard to agenda setting, in the past, overloaded summit agendas frustrated the heads. This year, Canada will not go beyond its three topics of Africa, terrorism and the world economy. This is essential so that the heads do not dissipate their attention.

Summit preparation should refine and concentrate the issues, to get the greatest value out of the heads' intervention. This is now harder than ever, because the G8 supporting apparatus has grown and other countries and non-state actors are rightly more involved. The best use of the summit is to induce agreement on issues disputed among the G7/G8 at lower levels. Sometimes raising a topic to summit level will be enough in itself to secure such agreement. If not, the preparations should narrow the gap to the point where the heads can bridge it.

When the heads of government meet their peers in the informal setting of the summit, they become aware both of their own international responsibilities and of the domestic constraints faced by the others. This can enable them solve problems that have baffled others, by virtue of their supreme political authority and their democratic legitimacy. But these gifts cannot be exercised in a vacuum. Good personal empathy at the summit produces its best results on the basis of careful preparation.

Decisions taken at the summit should be followed up and implemented through wider institutions, especially those of universal membership. Sometimes the summit itself has had to conduct institution building, as was the case with money laundering. But normally it should strengthen existing institutions. G8 members must set an example of full implementation of summit decisions. Nothing undermines the summits' reputation as much as commitments that are not honoured.

The G7/G8, both at and below the summit level, has made great advances in involving non-G8 countries and non-state actors since the move to heads-only summits in 1998. This move left the leaders free to develop wider contacts. This outreach is essential to enable the G7/G8 to maintain credibility in a globalising world.

The summits have been sensitive to NGO pressures since the debt relief marches by Jubilee 2000 at Birmingham 1998 and Cologne 1999. By Okinawa 2000 and Genoa

2001, both private business firms and NGOs were deeply involved in preparing and following up summit action, for example in the DOT-Force, the Global Aids and Health Fund, debt relief and renewable energy.

These cooperative links are in contrast to the violent street protests, which got so much media attention at Genoa. The Genoa protests, followed by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, justify the Canadian choice of the remote and secure venue of Kananaskis this year. But this isolation will handicap the summit's efforts to make its actions publicly acceptable. The aim should be to return to summits like Halifax 1995 or Birmingham 1998, when the leaders mingled with the ordinary citizens.

G7/G8 meetings at the sub-summit level have become flexible with respect to the involvement of non-G8 countries and international organisations, whether on an ad hoc or an institutional basis (as with the G20 finance ministers). This should continue. The heads should likewise maintain the practice, begun at Okinawa 2000, of inviting a group of leaders from developing countries to meet them before the summit proper. The admission of new members to the G8 itself, however, should be approached with caution. The G8's great merit is that it is small and compact enough for the leaders to have a direct exchange around the table. This quality would be lost if extra members were added in the interest of making the G8 more widely representative.

Gordon Smith*

Have summits suddenly become that much more important (for better or for worse, depending on where one is coming from)? This is doubtful. Our increasingly interdependent world needs governance. Indeed it needs better governance. It is not going to have anything that could be described as "global government" for a long, long time, if ever. So it needs a variety of mechanisms, of which the G8 is now one of the most important, to manage interdependence.

One must surely measure summits by their impact—by what happened which would not have happened had the summit not occurred. Everything, of course, does not happen at the summit itself. The preparatory process has been critical. By the time leaders come together, most of the tough decisions have already been made. But that is not to say that the leaders getting together do not matter. It is the fact that they will meet that forces decisions from the preparatory process. If the meeting was not going to take place, the pressure to arrive at consensus would evaporate.

Perhaps the most important innovation made at Halifax in 1995 (or actually after Halifax) was the compilation of all the commitments made at the meeting and a systematic follow-up to monitor their implementation. This resulted in the initiation of post-summit meetings of sherpas in the fall to review progress. This was truly an important innovation, for it addressed the critical issue of whether these meetings were just interesting discussions, photo-opportunities and long, boring communiqués, or something more.

It is hard for those who have not had the privilege of "being there" to appreciate the importance of the chemistry established by these key leaders getting to know each other better. This facilitates an enormously important process of communication amongst

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leaders. The fact of including Russia—and Canada here played a leading role—was very important to the development of closer relations between that country and the West (including Japan, for the sake of this argument, in the West). Russia felt less excluded as a result.

Real progress has been made in including other countries in the lead-up. Inviting heads of international institutions has been a positive development. But the talk about reaching out more to civil society has been essentially that—talk. That is too bad, as one can anticipate major demonstrations in June this year. Many of those present are really looking for better ways of being heard, of feeling that their point of view matters. It is important that they be heard, if only (and there are other important, positive, reasons) so that when the inevitable confrontations come with those who really just want to break up the meeting, it is clear to all that G8 leaders and those around them were truly open to inputs from that large majority of civil society that is motivated by the desire to make the world a better place.

Gerald Helleiner*

There are certain prerequisites for a successful summit. Summits only be successful if, first, they are focused on a relatively few topics; second, the topics of focus are ones within which political disagreements require high-level political resolution and there is better than zero chance of agreement; third, the ground has been well-prepared and the contentious issues identified by sherpas' meetings and other focused consultations; and fourth, the composition of the summit group is such that political power is not too unbalanced within it. Even then, the prospect of achieving "breakthrough" decisions, the achievement of which probably constitutes the best indicator of summit success, is extremely uncertain. Where political disagreements are deep, the likeliest outcomes of "full and frank discussion" at the highest level are "fudge" declarations and communiqués. Such meaningless statements serve no constructive purpose. Indeed, as argued below, they can be socially harmful.

Some hope exists that G7/G8 summits may be small steps toward effective, and much needed, global governance, not only in global economic affairs but in other spheres as well. There is as yet little sign, however, that G7/8 summits have moved the global governance agenda forward very far. The most important progress in this respect has been achieved in other, much more focused, international institutions and deliberations. Worse, when it comes to matters of global governance, the G7/G8 summits carry no political legitimacy whatsoever. These potential "global governors" are self-appointed. They have every political right, of course, to meet among themselves to discuss with whomever they chose, whatever they chose, and as often as they chose—as do other political leaders around the world. But they obviously have no political right to speak for the world. Moreover, when they collectively seek to move the world, through their political or economic or military power, in particular directions that they perceive as in their collective interest, non-members can be expected both to object and to resist. A few years ago, a proposal was floated to create a "non-G7" grouping (not necessarily involving summit meetings) so as more effectively to resist, through collective action, the

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perceived growth of influence and power on the part of the G7. The initiative did not progress far. At present, region-based non-G7 groupings are the principal countervailing power to the G7/G8, both at the summit level and at other levels.

One can make a case for the inherent value of genuine and direct summit-level interpersonal interaction, particularly when free of prepared texts and advisors, whatever the leaders' eventual decisions or lack thereof. It is always likely to be helpful for political leaders, whether friends or enemies, to know one another better, and the world is likely to be a little safer and more predictable as a consequence of such increased knowledge among leaders of the G7 and G8, among others. The process is itself, in part, the product. Such social value as emanates from the process would undoubtedly accrue, to an even larger extent, from an enlarged and more representative membership.

SECOND ROUND DISCUSSION

John Kirton

The above contributions reflect a considerable degree of consensus, across geographic, professional, disciplinary, epistemic and generational divides, of what the core features of successful summits are. All agree, usually quite strongly, that summits should have a highly focused agenda, careful preparation from well-connected and committed sherpas, and allow leaders to get to know one another better, unleash the chemistry and develop the empathy they need to govern an ever more complex and “globalized” world. Given this impressive consensus, Jean Chrétien should be confident that he has designed his Kananaskis summit in these fundamental features exactly the right way.

Yet some critical points of disagreement remain among these experts, as they do in the broader summit debate. One concerns the effectiveness of recent summits. Here Robert Fauver's description of their recent decline competes with Gordon Smith's view of their enduring importance and Nicholas Bayne's evaluation of innovations in important issues and consistent, steady performance since 1998 as a consequence of the Birmingham reforms. Even so, Nicholas Bayne is concerned about implementation and Gerald Helleiner about “fudge” declarations that can be socially harmful. Do these varying judgments reflect a disagreement about the same evidence, or a deeper disagreement about the particular purpose and expectations of summitry itself? Part of the answer here may be found by asking our experts for their judgment about how successful the summits were the previous times Canada hosted—at Montebello 1981, Toronto 1988 and Halifax 1995.

A second key disagreement relates to summit membership. While John Chrétien and most Canadians can take comfort from the fact that most experts at least implicitly regard Canada as a worthy member, there is a real debate over whether to reduce or expand the club. Shrink the summit to as few as four, maintain the status quo, or expand it to be more representative, legitimate and effective are the options here. Choices here often rest on views about the core membership criteria. While many factors may be relevant, what are the central ones that summit members must have to deserve a seat at the table, in ways that make the summit work?

A third key disagreement, and one that will feature heavily in the commentary on Kananaskis, is how much and how civil society and citizens should be brought in. What

should the Canadian government do here, given its choice of the Kananaskis mountaintop as the summit site?

More broadly, three further questions arise for consideration on the road to Kananaskis. First, what can and should Canada do to increase the likelihood of success at its Kananaskis summit, especially in view of the apparently different preoccupations and instincts of President Bush on the one hand and many of the other members on the other?

Second, does Kananaskis have the correct agenda? While all the experts agree on the need for a tight focus, do the particular three themes selected some time ago still seem at the center of the international agenda as it has evolved. Can they be adapted or stretched to cover newer preoccupations, such as the rising violence in the Middle East? Or will they lead to the shopping list-like dilution that all agree is wrong?

Finally, can one anticipate what the outcome of the Kananaskis summit will be? Given the importance our experts have all placed on personal chemistry and careful preparation, and the fact that all the prospective leaders arriving in Kananaskis are familiar faces and summit veterans, as the journey to Kananaskis passes its mid point, just how successful is it likely to be?

Robert Fauver

From the general comments by my colleagues regarding President Bush and his administration, I think there may be some surprises in store at the Kananaskis summit. The president will go to the Kananaskis summit focused on the issues at hand and ready to interact with his colleagues. And despite arguments to the contrary he will listen and engage on the terrorism issues with his summit partners. Of course he will want to hear alternative proposals on how best to deal with the very real threat of terrorism, not just criticisms of his current approach. To the surprise of some observers, he has developed what many think are quite close relations with several key summit participants. The Americans are not 'focused elsewhere.' Clearly one of the major topics will be the first subject on the Canadian list—the global war on terrorism.

I would be surprised if the conversations held among the leaders rejected the hypothesis that terrorism was the major threat to our citizens and those in other countries around the world. The long term focus of the Bush administration may be perhaps a bit too committed for some summit colleagues, but their citizens would not like to face a New York-like event. Having put the principle of fighting terrorism over those of economic interests, the president has laid down some clear markers that some in Europe find uncomfortable. But the communiqué will not argue that the global fight should not proceed. Nor will there likely be a view expressed that President Bush was incorrect in naming the 'three axis of evil' as being major supporters of global terrorism. It would be surprising if any of the other leaders would argue that Iraq, Iran, or North Korea did not in fact support directly and indirectly terrorism. Perhaps I underestimate the economic interests of some in Europe regarding Iraq and Iran, but I doubt that they would publicly argue that the three are 'good guys.'

So I predict that one of the major outcomes of the summit meeting will be a strong statement against global terrorism, a recognition of the cooperation that already broadly exists among the G-7/8 in the fight against terrorism, and a forward-leaning

statement of continued strong efforts and mutual commitment. Less than this would lead many to conclude that the summit was not a success.

Regarding the state of the world economy and the need to adopt cooperative policies to support renewed global growth, I fully expect that the leaders will issue a statement outlining their continued commitment to pursuing growth oriented policies—as they almost always do. While it is a bit early to forecast the state of the various economies at the time of the summit, it is clear that Japan faces the most difficult situation among the members. And clearly, the leaders will want to encourage Japan to vigorously pursue domestic reform efforts in order to lay the basis for a resumption of job creating growth in the future. Current indications suggest that the U.S. economy is back on a growth path, though the strength of that recovery is still debatable.

But while a focus on current developments and the economic outlook is a necessary condition for a successful summit, it is not a sufficient condition. All seven members face serious long-term pension reform problems, low birth rates, and large unfunded pension liabilities. If the leaders are to provide vision for the young people of today, they must begin to address this set of interrelated issues. Without significant improvement in pension systems, the demand for public money in the future will overwhelm the ability of tax systems to provide other needed services. This politically charged issue would benefit from an international focus by the leaders of the industrial nations of the world. Leaders could call for the establishment of a ‘wise person group’ composed of representatives of each of their countries to investigate the ramifications of inaction and to outline the size and scope of the problem. A short, one-year time frame would keep attention focused on the serious nature of the problem.

Some of the discussions on the problems in Africa will likely be contentious and interesting, but the disagreements may not make their way into the concluding statement. For example, the U.S. proposal to significantly replace World Bank lending with World Bank grants is a hot button issue. The administration believes that the past cycle of lending, debt build up, and debt relief debates has not benefited the development process. Some focus on the relative value of grants verses loans (remembering that these are IDA loans, which are not commercially based loans) could be of interest to the leaders. I predict that there will be agreement to start providing some significant portion of World Bank money on a grant basis—especially for the poorest in Africa. Adding to already unmanageable debt levels does not support their development efforts.

My bottom line guess is that this upcoming summit will fall in the upper quarter of successful summits. As turned out to be the case with former President Reagan’s first summit, observers will be pleasantly surprised at President Bush’s style, commitment to the process, and the concrete results that come from the process.

Nicholas Bayne

The six questions for this second round are of increasing difficulty. In regard to the success of previous, Canadian-hosted summits, the first two, Montebello 1981 and Toronto 1988, were not very substantial. Unfortunately, they coincided, respectively, with Reagan’s first year in office, when he had not come to terms with summitry, and his last, when he was cruising into the sunset. But each had a lasting achievement:

Montebello started the 'Quad' of trade ministers (EU, U.S., Japan and Canada) and Toronto launched debt relief for poor countries.

Halifax 1995 was more productive. It focused on the reform of international institutions, especially the IMF. It resolved the transatlantic differences provoked by the Mexican financial rescue and produced a serious set of reforms, endorsed by the full IMF. These were spoiled by poor implementation, but that was not the fault of Halifax.

In regard to membership, the summit is small and the criteria are strict. Three stand out. The first is influence on the international economic system, rather than GNP size. Thus Canada is there rather than India. The second is regional balance. European integration may compress the Europeans at the table, but this is some way off. Meanwhile, Canada's presence strengthens the non-European axis. The third is a democratic system. This is the main factor keeping out China.

In regard to civil society participation, the summit is an opportunity for the G8 leaders to demonstrate to their citizens the merits of cooperation. This calls for good public education in advance and serious media briefing afterwards to stress the collective achievements. Civil society NGOs should not be privileged, except where they can contribute to summit preparation and follow-up, eg in health and IT.

To make Kananaskis a success, the agenda must be kept short. Subjects not selected for the summit should be firmly remitted to other G7/G8 groups, which should take responsibility. Since 1998, the leaders have gained new freedom by meeting on their own. They should give other G7/G8 ministers the same freedom, rather than trying to control this growing apparatus. In addition, the sherpa process should be strengthened by direct bilateral contacts in advance by Jean Chrétien with his fellow-heads of government. This could tease out domestic political problems not easily treated at the official level.

There is great merit in a short agenda chosen in advance. The topics for Kananaskis—Africa, terrorism and the world economy—are difficult enough to deserve summit attention. But the gap is not so wide as to risk a summit breach that would make things worse, as it could on climate change or food safety.

Africa is essential, to follow the Genoa Plan and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Mbeki (South Africa) and Obasanjo (Nigeria) have shown that NEPAD is serious by distancing themselves from Mugabe of Zimbabwe. Kananaskis should make this programme a genuine 'Marshall Plan for Africa,' in both its economic and political aspects. This means: committing resources in aid and trade access to match African efforts; ensuring the Africans keep 'ownership' of the programme; and establishing a durable institutional framework—this will be a long haul.

Terrorism, too, is essential, after September 11, 2001. It has its political and economic aspects. Politically, the heads need to agree on security-based actions against terrorists, including policy on rogue states and terror-generating crises like Palestine. Economically, they should address the roots of terrorism—misery and alienation. Early U.S. advocacy of this seemed to recede after the successful WTO meeting at Doha, but has been revived at Monterrey. The G8 members should pool their ideas on how this political imperative can generate stronger economic cooperation. A good result at the World summit on Sustainable Development will be part of this.

The world economy was first put on the agenda because of economic troubles in the G7. The U.S. is now recovering; though Europe and Japan are still weak. What can

the heads do more than their finance ministers? The heads should address the damage done to non-G8 countries that have suffered because of their dependence on commodity exports (except oil), private financial flows and tourism.

All three topics lead back to the problem of world poverty. The summits have spent increasing time on this since Lyon in 1996—but their work is far from done. They have launched some valuable initiatives since then, for example debt relief, market access, untying aid, IT, infectious diseases and education—and have endorsed specific targets. The implementation of earlier G8 initiatives should all be reviewed before Kananaskis; where necessary, the heads should authorise corrective action.

Gordon Smith

When the Halifax summit took place, the major criticism at the time was that, for all the expense and hoopla, there was not much tangible that happened—some argued summits were a waste of time and money. Now the major criticism of the summits is that they do too much—that G8 leaders try to run the world in general and international institutions in particular.

I doubt the realism of dropping some of the current members of the G8 or, for that matter, the G7 disappearing altogether. More likely is an expansion of the "8" so that the summit becomes more representative. This will be felt increasingly necessary as the G8 moves increasingly beyond the economic agenda. One possibility is that the G20 will transmogrify so that it meets, perhaps at first "as well as" as opposed to "instead of," at the level of leaders. Already one can see signs of the G20 agenda broadening. It is now too late to do much to bring in civil society before Kananaskis. That is regrettable.

It is important to understand that, barring a major international crisis, the agenda for Kananaskis has effectively already been set. The three main subjects of discussion will be the global war on terrorism, the need to adopt policies to support renewed growth in the global economy, and Africa. Regarding the war on terrorism, it is likely that there will be a contentious discussion concerning the desire of President Bush to extend that war to those in "the axis of evil" who want to develop weapons of mass destruction. Iraq will be particularly neuralgic. On Africa, there is a concerted effort to respond to the economic plan put forward by African leaders (NEPAD). This has involved an unprecedented device—the creation of African Personal Representatives (APR) by G8 leaders. Although in Canada's case the APR is also the Personal Representative of the Prime Minister, which is not the case for any of the other G8 countries. It remains to be seen how the two preparatory streams of work will be integrated.

The summit comes at a critical time. The United States is clearly pursuing a unilateralist approach to the world. It does not want to be constrained by organizations such as the United Nations or even NATO. The U.S. is also prepared to walk away from parts of the multilateral system, whether in the security, human rights or environmental fields. It is very important for the friends of the U.S. to underline that the world needs multilateral solutions—put another way, that the U.S. cannot go off on its own despite its vastly preponderant military power. The U.S. needs friends in the world—and that is what it has in the G8. It is difficult to see where we will be in late June, but given the current rate at which the situation in the Middle East is deteriorating, that indeed may well be a major preoccupation. Perhaps it will be for the G8 to champion the Saudi peace

proposal. The domestic politics of this in the U.S., Canada and elsewhere among the G8 is another matter.

As to anticipating success, it will probably vary, agenda item by agenda item. It normally does. On the global economy, it seems that G7 countries are coming out of recession—leaders can celebrate this. On terrorism, much will depend on the U.S. approach. I would not venture a prediction. On Africa, there is clearly a lot of activity, but it seems there will not be much more money. Moreover the trade issues seem as yet to be resolved—again due to difficult domestic politics in a number of G8 countries. Expectations in Africa are, however, high.

Gerald Helleiner

There seems to be agreement that one cannot expect too much from G7/8 summits of themselves. There is a major "implementation" problem, and such follow-up mechanisms as now exist, while better than before, remain weak. One could argue that, where follow-up properly rests with more fully multilateral bodies, one cannot and should not blame the G7 for failure to deliver. After all, the rest of the world may disagree with G7 leaders as to what the world requires. But G7 leaders should, at least, be subject to some kind of monitoring with respect to the commitments made over which they possess full control. They still are not.

Canada is not an essential player in such small-group summitry as now exists. Still less would it belong in a smaller group, such as Robert Fauver suggests, together with the U.S., EU and Japan. Its strength lies in its potential capacity, as a middle-level player, to bridge differences between the major powers (U.S., EU, and Japan) and the rest of the world. Its greatest "successes" are likely to be achieved in the larger and more representative fora and institutions in which it may be able to exercise such influence, independently of the pressure to conform to G7 approaches and norms which may not coincide with its own (much broader) interests. It should, therefore, be working to strengthen and legitimise such broader bodies, not least those of the UN, or the G20 Finance Ministers which it has until recently chaired, and worry less about the "success" of G7/G8 summits.

The failure of the summit system to provide adequate representation to the majority of the world's population, while making decisions that are likely to affect them, is a far more serious flaw than its failure to recognize "civil society" which, at least within the G7 countries, already has plenty of legitimate opportunity to make its voice(s) heard. Northern NGOs cannot legitimately or effectively speak for the South, however much they may purport to do so. While useful alliances can be formed in pursuit of shared objectives, in the end only the developing countries' governments and peoples can speak for developing countries' interests. Many developing country governments carry little more legitimacy in speaking for the peoples of their own (developing) countries, let alone global interests, than G7 governments do. Still, increased developing country representation, however imperfect, must be a prime objective in any effort to create effective and legitimate global governance. It may be politically expedient to search for better ways to listen to legitimate Northern NGOs prior to G7/G8 meetings; but it is not nearly as important as creating space for developing country voices.

The prospect for much "value added" from the forthcoming Kananaskis G7/G8 summit is dim. Some attempt has been made to focus discussion—on terrorism, global growth prospects, and Africa. But this is still a huge agenda for a two-day meeting; and one can be confident that, before it is through, many more issues will find their way into the discussion and communiqués.

Whereas there may be some merit in a summit-level exchange of views on the "war on terrorism," it is inconceivable, in current political circumstances in the U.S. and with the current dispensation of global military power, that the U.S. would be willing to listen seriously to others' views in this sphere. U.S. overall power within the G7/8 is now so great and U.S. preoccupations so focused (elsewhere) that there must also be doubt about the potential productivity of G7 summit discussions in the other areas of intended focus. In the sphere of global economic growth, the key discussions take place in other fora, including the meetings of the G7 Finance Ministers, in which participants are better informed and more competent. Especially after the U.S. administration's announcement, against most expectations, of its intention to significantly expand its still limited and highly conditional development assistance at the Monterrey conference on Finance for Development, it is difficult to see any prospect of further "breakthrough" agreements in this sphere. The same is true of the prospect for a significant G7/8 Action Plan for Africa. Limited U.S. interest or commitment is bound to mean that any G7-agreed response to Africa's NEPAD will be weak, more rhetorical than real.

The enormous gap between the rhetoric of G7 leaders, at such meetings as the UN's Millennium summit and the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development, and the reality of G7 policies toward developing countries, has become an ever more serious problem. Political leaders and the concerned citizenry not only of developing countries but also in wealthier countries, not least within the G7 itself, have tired of the endless string of global development declarations, each devoid of monitorable and timetabled deliverables. Adding to them, as the Kananaskis summit now appears certain to do, will simply engender more popular cynicism and disrespect both for summits and, more generally, for what passes for democratic politics in the G7/8.

The conditions for a significant G7/8 summit success are not now there. There would be little lost if the frequency of G7/8 summits were drastically reduced, the expectation of annual G7/8 summits forever abandoned, and summit events were reserved for circumstances in which the prospects for success were higher and the participation more representative.