

G8 PERFORMANCES, ST. PETERSBURG POSSIBILITIES

PRE-G8 ACADEMIC CONFERENCE: Remarks by Professor Andrew F. Cooper
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It is a pleasure to be with you today.

The Think Tank I represent – CIGI- is delighted to be in Moscow for this pre-Summit
Academic Conference.

We have built up a valuable link with Professor John Kirton, and his team at the
University of Toronto G8 Information Centre

This work features both traditional and non-traditional outlets for our cooperative activity
– talks, books, and web-casting

We appreciate how innovative Professor Kirton’s G8 website has been, this being shown
also by its huge amount of hits

And we have ambitious goals ourselves along these lines.

This is very much in our mandate, as one of our most creative tools is our so-called
IGLOO system – for the build up of a virtual, freely accessible library for work on
International and/or Global Governance, as well as a system for on-line communities of
researchers

Please take a look at our website www.cigonline.org and www.theigloo.org for further
information

We also delighted to be working with our new friends at MGIMO

This is part of general interest in building networks of distinguished Think Tanks and
Universities

But we have specific interest in MGIMO – both because of its connection with the G8
summit process and because of our focus on the so-called BRICS countries

BRICs of course have been given ample attention by Goldman-Sachs – through its
lumping together of the 4 biggest emerging/emergent economies – Russia as well as
China, India, Brazil

But we want to look at this phenomenon in an extended fashion, examining not only their enormous economic potential – highlighted in Russia’s case by its key role on energy security

But also by extending this outlook to analyze their other areas of strength – with a wide range from foreign policy and foreign investment – as well as the social consequences of economic success

Well after the St. Petersburg Summit is over, therefore, we would like to keep up this relationship

For our immediate purposes though it is the G8 that captures our attention

There is little question that the G8 has confirmed its status as the hub of the international system.

John Kirton has described the potential uplift of the G8 as : ‘Prospectively the effective centre ...of global governance.’”

This status is of considerable import to our research centre – CIGI – as much of our mandate is to analyze and think about ways that international governance can be taken to another stage of development.

As is well known we would still prefer some more expansive form of institutional innovation or put another way we appreciate the G8 so much that we want it reproduced!

But while we want some changes - we concede and appreciate that the G8 has an enormous role to play both as an agenda setter and deliverer and that right now we are at the high point of its influence

One sign of both this present standing – and its potential to do more – is the G8’s ability to rebrand itself in the past 6 years,

In 2001, the G8 was arguably at it lowest ebb with the Genoa Summit - marked by the negative atmosphere of the so-called anti-globalizers

Few can argue that the image was dragged down by the protests associated with this movement. c

By 2005, the Genoa criticism was replaced by what can be termed as the Gleneagles enthusiasm, a rise associated not only with the debt relief, but the push to attain the Millenium Development Goals

Skepticism still remains of course about how far results can be taken but there is a wide appreciation of the opening up, in terms of the process and its substantive claims

Few can argue that what the G8 did last year did fully confirm its hub status - not only for what it said and did, but also for its buzz

Even the tragic bombing in London could not dampen the sense of excitement about the prospects for institutional renewal

And this enthusiasm could also be linked to the fact that the G8 was extremely celebrity rich – with the participation by Bono and Geldof in bilaterals with a number of G8 leaders – a new element that so intrigued me that I have spent much of the last year working up a book on Celebrity Diplomacy

Together they put the G8 on the world's mental map – in a far more comprehensive fashion

This hub status both helps but also increases the risks for the G8 – a duality that raises even further the importance of what we will discuss today

The stakes do become higher when the G8 turns its attention to any specific issue

This has been true when the G8 has turned its attention in the past to geo-political issues. The mediation effort at Bonn – including the important role played by Russia - on Kosovo comes to mind.

But it is also true when there is spillover from issues – bogged down –in other institutional arenas

The pressure on the G8 to use its catalytic power has mounted for this year's summit most noticeably on the trade - or more accurately, the agricultural trade dossier

From one side this is an old story – going back to the use of the G8 during the Uruguay Round

From another perspective however it is quite new - as no longer is it only the G8 countries who are involved

The big emergent countries want leverage in and over the G8 as well – as can be seen by the elaborate dance by Lula with Tony Blair and Angela Merkel over who would be invited to St Petersburg and what would be discussed there - a dance played out in one on one meetings and on the side of the recent meeting between the EU and leaders from the Americas in Vienna – the largest meeting by leaders in Vienna indeed since the famous Congress of Vienna

Or for that matter – Gordon Brown's intrusion into the same issue – with his own call for a break in the deadlock

Such activities reveal the appeal of the G8 as a deal-maker

They also illustrate the danger that they raise expectations so high that disappointment is almost inevitable – a larger phenomenon and problem of summitry – and a reason why senior officials worry about informal meetings where big promises may emerge in an unplanned fashion

Such raised expectations are evident on many other key issues addressed throughout the recent summit cycle

Evian and the water initiative – that was not picked up by the Bush administration at Sea Island

Or on health where the G8 raised the bar – and its success acted as a trip wire for its moves in other policy areas

It can be argued that after an impressive start – the G8 has lost ground on the health agenda with mixed expectations surrounding its performance appearing in the run-up to St. Petersburg

If there is one sensitive area which has been pricked by critics – it is health

Stephen Lewis for example has launched a severe attack on the G8 – for not doing a better job of fundraising and passing the money onto the UN system

Lewis also attributes this mixed record to the G8's unwillingness to take on the pharmaceutical industry

This broad-based critical outlook however does not do justice to the variety of arguments that support G8's initiatives – that Professor Kirton and I were privileged to have rehearsed in a conference we co-organized on the Global Governance of Health

Many academics prefer to go on the offensive about health – offering up more creative initiatives in order to make up the policy gap.

On this push John Kirton – and several colleagues (a group in which I include myself) has moved out in front in arguing that the G8 has become the leader in the health field by default

Others see it by design as becoming the hub of the global governance of health but would like it to take on a greater leadership role

When predicting the Russian role, Professor Kirton stated: “Russia.... Should continue to propel the G8's emergence as an effective centre of global health governance in the years ahead”.

The host government has taken the view however that it is better to consolidate policy delivery, with President's Putin's personal representative saying in April that: "we don't want any more commitments". Their emphasis is on efficiency and especially in regards to the spending of committed funds.

This may be a sensible approach – especially if you see not money, but delivery as the real problem

But this choice inevitably raises the profile on health – in that without new money, the onus on delivery will be even more closely monitored

Moreover - if the G8 is to retain credibility on this issue it needs to make choices and stick to those choices.

It will be hard to swing back and forth between the focus on securing new funding and ensuring the delivery of old commitments each year

The danger here is that if it does not maintain this discipline is that it will be seen as the proverbial paper tiger: all talk and no action!

This is an image that it has had a tendency to embellish on economic issues – whether on the Chinese currency question or IMF and Argentine debt re-negotiations

Non-compliance is different from the new forms of resistance as encountered in the trade negotiations – but it shows the fragility of the system - with the willingness of many major countries (including the other members of BRICs) to simply say NO

All of this reinforces the need to push the G8 in two directions

One is in the monitoring of where the G8 has achieved results and where it has missed out, leaving gaps

Credit on this task again goes to John Kirton's team – which has replaced anecdotes with accounting

The other move is to extend the hub capacity

Russia has gained considerably by its connection with the G8 – a role amplified by its leadership on a key issue: energy security

But this hub standing – and functional capacity – can only be increased by bringing other powers into the tent

The need for these countries is demonstrated by the ongoing mode of outreach – to China, India, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico

Each of these countries is at the very least a regional anchor and each has a functional interest – and capacity – on the issues that lie at the core of the G8 – energy, health, demographics, education, and global stability

Russia's entry into the G8 is testimony to the capacity of the G8 hub to expand

This expansion may take place – as with Canada and Italy in the 1970s – or with Russia in the G8 itself – one by one or two by two

Or it may come as part of a bigger jump – outside but parallel to the G8 – what the former Canadian Prime Minister refers to as the need for a new architecture through the establishment of a Leader's 20 (L20) summit

20 is an attractive number - in that this is the same number of major questions highlighted in the recent book *High Noon* by a prominent European observer of global governance

But if this big bang is too ambitious – at the very least what is needed is the expansion of the same opportunities to the rest of the BRIC countries – or what we at CIGI call BRICSAM – adding at the very least South Africa and Mexico to this group

The G8 plus G 5 is becoming established as a norm in one way or the other

Once opened up in this way it allows some opportunity to go further – to think about using forms of variable geometry and to allow other countries to be brought in on the basis of some functional criteria, because of either expertise or need for current examples on health or demographic issues etc.

This would allow the opportunity for either a Bangladesh (and or a smaller Nordic country) to sit around the table on a one off basis

This is a different model from the one inherited from the G20 Finance – but one that has a similar mix of opportunities and disadvantages

It is also a model that allows new forms of networks to be extended beyond the G8 – as indeed is happening between the G8 and G20 hosts next year – with a trip to South Africa by German officials to set the stage for different forms of co-operation

To make this move on representation – in the absence of a crisis – will be amply rewarded and a new bargain will emerge not on the older deal of embedded liberalism (made famous by John Ruggie) but in terms of a compact between the post 1945/or 1975 world and the world of 2005

A place at the table in return for a greater degree of responsibility in solving problems of fundamental importance to – and beyond – the G8 will be an issue here at St Petersburg and surely beyond