Building Democratic Partnerships:

The G8-Civil Society Link

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Introduction

The Group of Eight (G8) major market democracies (United States, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Italy, Canada, and Russia) came to Kananaskis, Alberta, for its annual summit on 26-27 June 2002. The question of who would come with it was on everyone's mind in the leadup to the event. At the previous summit in Genoa, Italy, in July 2001, the eight leaders, together with the European Union, had been joined by some 2,000 supporting officials, 3,000 journalists, and the leaders and officials of several African countries and international organizations. Surrounding them were a security force of several thousand and 200,000 civil society protesters from all across Europe and around the world. Less visible were the many hundreds of civil society representatives who worked with the host government to shape the agenda in the lead up to the summit, the anarchists who sent bombs to Italian authorities in the days before it began, and the members of the al-Qaeda terrorist network who planned to murder the summit leaders and their entourage at the Summit itself.

At Genoa, the death of an anarchist who attacked Italian security forces marked the culmination a recent trend toward ever larger, ever more violent civil society protests at major international meetings. Begun at the World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial meeting in Seattle in November 1999, it proceeded through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) meetings in Washington and Prague in 2000. In the summer of 2001 it came to Canada for the Quebec City Summit of the Americas, where 25,000 gathered to demonstrate. While Quebec City was a quintessentially Canadian, peaceful protest, the Swedes suffered a real shock soon after when major violence broke out at the European Council summit they hosted in Gothenburg, three weeks before the Genoa event.

As the G8 leaders witnessed the violence at Genoa, they concluded that their next summit would have to be a very different kind of affair. Thus Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, as host of the next summit, chose a venue in an isolated mountaintop resort in remote, rural Kananaskis, Alberta. Such a small, secure, secretive, executive-retreat style summit meant tiny delegations of no more than 30 per country, less visible on-site security, and a surrounding media corps housed in the medium sized city of Calgary sixty miles away. Separated in such fashion from the journalists, protestors and civil society representatives, the

G8 leaders could hold their summit, so they calculated, in splendid isolation, even more than they had when Summitry first started in 1975

In the following months after Genoa, Chrétien decided to dispense with the traditional end-of-summit communiqué that recapped the proceedings. The massive terrorist attack on the North American homeland on 11 September 2001 put security concerns, rather than civil society dialogue, in first place. The successful ministerial meeting of the WTO, held with minimal protest in November 2001 in remote, heavily policed, undemocratic Doha, reinforced the determination to take the new approach. Canada began its formal year as host in January 2002 with no well-developed plan to consult Canadian civil society organizations at home or abroad. It slashed the summit's duration from the usual three days to two, arguing publicly that it could effectively squeeze its scheduled dialogue with African leaders and international organizations, its G7 economic summit, and its regular G8 summit into forty-eight hours.

At the conclusion of the Kananaskis Summit, it appeared that this retreat-to-the mountaintop model of G8 summitry had worked very well. Kananaskis was in many ways one of the most successful summits ever. No one died or was injured, save for an intruding bear which fell out of a tree. Only 2,000–3,000 protestors assembled in Calgary and Kananaskis and a further 4,000 in Canada's capital city of Ottawa. There were virtually no injuries or property damage anywhere. By the end of the Summit, only three people had been arrested in Alberta — two visiting Americans and one union official. In Ottawa, perhaps symbolically, an effort to burn the American flag failed to catch fire as it was drenched by heavy rains. The 2,000–3,500 journalists in attendance, only 100 of whom were allowed to go near the leaders at Kananaskis, had little other than the substance of the Summit to focus upon. While some wondered whether the estimated CA$300–500 spent on the Summit million was a worthwhile investment, Calgarians largely welcomed the estimated CA$243 million that was injected into the local economy as a result. Indeed, the Kananaskis formula seemed so successful that the French, hosts of the 2003 Summit, rushed to replicate it, by choosing as their site Evian-le Bain in the isolated French Alps. With the nearest medium sized city, Geneva, located in another country, it remained unclear what plans the French had to allow the media, let alone civil society participants or protesters, anywhere near their event.

In this now confirmed instinct to retreat to a small, ultra secure, secret summit, separated from civil society, the G8 is in danger of making a major mistake, as it embarks on its fifth, seven-year cycle of summitry in 2003. For after the 2001 assault on Genoa, on the World Trade Centre in New York City, and on the Pentagon in Washington, the G8 has been launched into a new crisis of governability, and resulting war of persuasion and legitimacy. The primary target is no longer the other privileged few leaders from once competing major powers meeting in private in a mountain hideaway. It is the many millions of stakeholders watching, listening or reading through the traditional media or the Internet. After Genoa, the proliferating stories of the death, injury, protests, and police brutality at the G8 made it essential for G8 leaders to mount

a much more innovative and effective effort to show that they were indeed trying to make globalization work for the benefit of all. Two months later, with the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in flames, the need was to prove to the world that such socially sensitive globalization was much more than just a singular crusade that predominantly white, wealthy, Western, often Christian countries were imposing on Muslims or on a dispossessed developing world (Nye 2002). Private encounters on a mountaintop, cut off from civil society within the G8's own democratic societies, are an inadequate response. Instead, better and more innovative ways must be found to connect with civil society and, through the media, with citizens throughout the G8 and around the world.

This paper offers an 11-point programme to meet that challenge. Its proposals flow from the seminal and enduring purpose of the G7/8 summit as a unique institution led by democratically elected leaders. The proposals do not disturb the integrity of the summit, including the need for leaders to meet alone to deliberate with full frankness, set new normative directions, and take timely, well tailored and ambitious decisions that express their collective political will. To a large extent, they are drawn from mechanisms that similar international institutions, to which Canada and its G8 partners belong, have already successfully employed. They have modest funding and other resource requirements. And in some cases they build on the few tentative steps the G8 itself has taken in recent years. Together they could transform the twenty-first century G8 Summit from a shrunken retreat of apparently scared and insecure politicians into an occasion on which self-confident democratic leaders reach out in partnership with their citizens to build a better world.

1 Remember Rambouillet's Rationale

In considering how to produce a G7/8 summit that can both connect with civil society and accomplish its ambitious agenda, the first step is to remember the reality of Rambouillet - the essential reasons why the summit was created and its main purpose (Putnam and Bayne 1987, Bayne 2000). Three elements stand out.

First, the summit was conceived and created as a global concert. Its chief architect was American Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who, recognizing America's new relative weakness, consciously sought to construct the modern equivalent of the 19th century Concert of Europe (Kissinger 1975). The summit was thus conceived with a comprehensive, interlinked global agenda to provide effective collective global governance, where America alone had failed, across the acute East-West and North-South divides. Its agenda embraced and integrated both economic and political issues and concerns. Moreover, in sharp contrast to the United Nations system, the G7 proclaimed its willingness to intrude into the domestic affairs of its members to defend fundamental democratic values and to deal with pressing national concerns. G8 citizens and outsiders, as policy networks, pressure groups or protestors, thus have every right to ask the summit to take up and solve any problem they and their communities face. Unlike charter-bound and

subject-specific international institutions, the G7/8 system, especially at the summit level, cannot legitimately ignore an issue or pass the buck without offering a credible rationale for doing so.

Second, the summit was conceived and created as a democratic concert. Its common purpose, highlighted at its 1975, was, in the discourse of the time, to combat the political 'crisis of governability' and economic 'stagflation' - the entrenched combination of stagnant growth and high inflation - that was both cause and effect of the crisis facing the democratic world. In what might be considered the 'Charter of Rambouillet,' the G7 leaders proudly proclaimed: 'We came together because of shared beliefs and shared responsibilities. We are each responsible for the government of an open democratic society, dedicated to individual liberty and social advancement. Our success will strengthen, indeed is essential to, democratic societies everywhere.' G7/8 leaders are thus in the first instance self-defined democrats, not plutocrats. They can thus say with confidence to citizens that theirs is not a closed club of neo-liberal devotees dedicated to ever more far reaching financial, trade, investment, and other forms of economic liberalization. At the same time, their seminal purpose requires them to reach out to the world's citizenry and to practice as well as to preach the principles they proclaim. Indeed, only by doing so can they accomplish their core objectives of the current generation, from combating terrorism, to delivering democratically based development in Africa. This fundamental point was well put by Canada's foreign minister, Bill Graham, when he told the G6B civil society conference in Calgary, "we live in democratic societies, and ultimately we respond to public opinion."

Third, the G7 was constructed as a public concert, rather than a club to practice democracy in private. Beyond informal discussion, summit leaders had to produce, present, and persuade others of the value of new directions - the innovative principles and norms that would guide government policy-makers and their democratic publics along different paths toward an improved global order (Kirton 2002a, Kirton 2002b, Baker 2000). They also had to take concrete decisions to put these new principles into effect. The early leaders were tempted by the intrigue of nineteenth century secret diplomacy. But they knew that they were popularly elected, twentieth century politicians who needed the limelight of the attending media to succeed. They thus discarded the option of meeting in private and announcing only afterward that a meeting had taken place, and banishing the media from the first gathering at Rambouillet. This in part was making a public virtue of physical necessity. It was virtually impossible to move the United States president, his advisers, secret service, and nuclear deterrent without the attending White House press corps catching wind, demanding on-site briefings, and rushing to print their conclusion in the post-Vietnam war world. But, above all, the leaders knew that if they were to be successful they had to speak directly to their voters and to those around the world who wanted the chance to vote.

After 11 September a new premium has been placed on using the summit to send a persuasive public message of confidence that democratic governance is possible, to identify the formula to realize this ideal,

and to call upon the best of citizens' social capital to give it life. Such actions, from the collective G8 bully pulpit, are what effective democratic governance is all about. Preaching, persuasion, psychology, moral suasion, and the provision of reference points matter as much as coercion and bribery through material punishments and reward (Nye 2002). While summits may indeed seem like little more than global hot tub parties that produce little beyond a concluding piece of paper, a family photo, and surrounding photo ops, G8 leaders have long known the formidable power of credible commitments encoded on paper and presented through pictures and words.

2 Don't Assume An Alberta Advantage

The second step is to avoid the temptation to rely on the natural 'Alberta advantage' as the recipe to produce winning Summits in the years ahead. For the "Montebello model" of summitry that succeeded when first practised in Canada in 1981, and again at Kananaskis in 2002, is not easily transposable to Europe and the United States, where the political culture and geography are distinctly different from than in Canada.

Kananaskis proved to be such a civil summit in part because of the small numbers of protestors who arrived on site. Indeed, the 7,000 civil society activists (not all of whom were protestors), were only one tenth of the 70,000 members of Jubilee 2000 who formed a human chain around the Summit site in Birmingham 1998 to shout "Drop the debt!" and launch the modern phase of civil society involvement at the Summit itself (Hajnal 2002a, 2002b). With as many security personnel as protestors, it was easy for the authorities to cope, especially as the latter had the country's best and fully professional police forces carefully deployed and well trained in advance. The deliberately non-threatening tactics adopted by the estimated 5,000–7,000 police officers and military personnel mobilized at Kananaskis and Calgary further helped..

However Evian-le-Bain, much like Genoa, is geographically central and conveniently located for an all-too-easy, inexpensive, one-day train trip from virtually anywhere in densely populated Europe. Its location will easily attract well-organized anarchists to sponsor special trains to take the faithful, fellow travelers, and freethinkers to the summit site for a weekend of political action and tourism, replete with colour, drama, danger, and possible historic significance. Calgary, in sharp contrast, is an easy one-day train ride or drive from virtually nowhere, sitting isolated from the major metropolitan centres across a widely dispersed North American continent. Evian-le-Bain, in southern France, joins Genoa in coming from country with still consequential socialist, communist and right wing radical parties, as well as well established professional anarchists with a violent bent. Canada completely lacked such components in its political culture, and did not even support the militia or violent fundamentalist movements that have afflicted the United States.

Evian-le Bain and subsequent Summits will also lack the September 11th advantage that Kananaskis had. Coming nine months after the shock of September 11th, Kananasksis could credibly proceed with sealed off leaders and heavy security, to protect the leaders from the Al Quada network that has long targeted G7/8 Summits, and from the very real local terrorists that British, Russian and other G8 leaders have long faced. Not surprisingly, a late November 2001 public opinion poll showed 77 per cent of Canadians thought the summit should go ahead even with the threat of protest, disruption, and violence, 63 per cent would blame protestors rather than police for any violence that took place, and 44 per cent would be in favour of the police using all necessary force to control demonstrations, even if the result was loss of life. (Macleans 2002) Yet the September 11th shock was never as strong in politically violence prone Europe as it was in North America. And even with the Al Quada and Taliban leadership still on the loose, and subsequent shocks such as that in Bali, the September 11th effect it likely to progressively wear off. Should subsequent Summits continue to isolate leaders behind legions of imperial-storm-trooper-looking security forces, citizens will increasingly conclude that the purpose is to protect them not from death at the hands of foreign terrorists but dissenting views from the voters at home.

Evian-le-Bain does share the one "Alberta advantage" of an isolated mountain location that will be difficult for protestors to get to, easy for security forces to defend, and easy for leaders to avoid outside distractions as they get down to work. But with the nearest city located in a different country, it will be even more difficult than at Kananaskis-Calgary for the media and civil society activists to be allowed anywhere near the event. The likely result is mounting frustration, more violent assaults on the mountain fortress, and large demonstrations in Paris and other French cities. With the media similarly cut off from independent, high quality sources about what is happening at the Summit, it is likely that these easy-to-cover, highly visual images of protests, rather than policy substance, will dominate coverage of the event.

There is thus a pressing need a much more organized, proactive program, in the leadup to and at the Summit, to give civil society their valuable voice. With Evian again focusing on the development issues where NGO's and businesses have long been centrally involved, and again including leaders from the merging democratic developing world, the need for openness and inclusion is much enhanced.

3 Inform The Public

The third step is to provide much more information about the G7/8 on the internet and in other forms (Bayne 1999). Students of soft power now, and communications strategy before, would easily recognize the enormous imbalance in information available about the G7/8, from its participants on the one hand and from the critics on the other, and the cumulative impact this can have in shaping public attitudes and arousing public action about the G7/8.

The information imbalance reached critical levels in the months immediately following Genoa when the world's media were filled with words and images about violence and death, the alleged brutality of the Italian police, and the continuing imprisonment under cruel conditions of some of the detained protesters. Hundreds of civil society groups reinforced the message by devoting their websites to the cause. The Canadian government, as the successor host, launched its summit-specific website immediately after Genoa but loaded virtually no new content until it formally assumed the chair at the start of 2002. The G7/8, with no secretariat and website of its own, was thus left defenceless for more than six months as its reputation was assaulted on the internet and in the information wars. In the world of film documentary, the opposition again struck first, with a feature film from Italy's leading leftist directors defining what Genoa meant.

Because transparency is a basic democratic duty, the G7/8 collectively, perhaps through two or three successive hosts working in tandem, should devise a co-ordinated strategy to redress the imbalance. They should have a single permanent website with a continuous stream of new information to meet the needs of an interested public (Hajnal 1999). The website should include a comprehensive list of the activities of many dozens of ministerial bodies and official working groups that now make up the vast, invisible system of G7/8 governance - a system that even those inside the G7/8 process have difficulty tracking. It should also provide regular compliance reports on how and how well existing commitments are being met or why they are not and should not be met as circumstances change. Both insiders and outsiders have a similar need, and common democratic obligation, to know and understand how the 'soft law' decisions of their democratically elected leaders are being fulfilled. Indeed, the leaders themselves should be the first to want to know if their summit commitments are being implemented as they intended, and, if not, why not.

4 Include Parliamentarians

The fourth step is to put parliamentarians into the summit process. For the past half-century, the major intergovernmental institutional systems, from the United Nations to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), have understood that parliamentarians are essential to their work. Canadians and Americans have learned a similar lesson in the management of their unique bilateral relationship and long ago created the Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group. More recently, under the leadership of William Graham, as chair of the Canadian House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (SCFAIT), Canada founded an assembly of legislators in the Americas. The democratically and popularly elected leaders, who meet periodically in the plurilateral institutional system of the summit of the Americas, recognize that the ongoing engagement of democratically elected legislators is essential to the realization of their democratic purpose and their many development tasks.

The basic mission of strengthening democracy for its own sake and as a building block for development is no less central to the G8, especially with the high priority placed on poverty reduction in Africa and the shared recognition that good governance is a prerequisite for sustainable development. 'Eurocommunism' and 'crisis of governability' in the mid-1970s, the democratic revolution in Russia in the 1990s, the ongoing democratic deficit in the European Union, and the need to sustain the democratic revolution confirm that the democratic mission remains central to the work of the G8. As the Summit of the Americas and the G7/8 systems are, for Canada and the United States, the only genuine international institutions centred on institutionalized, plurilateral summitry in which all participants are democratically and popularly elected leaders, it is clear that the G8 should join the Americas in bringing parliamentarians into the process in an organized way.

The case for putting parliamentarians in is clear. Legislators explain to citizens the work of, and thinking behind, the actions of the executive branch. They act as sophisticated political sounding boards and give executive branch governors timely advance information about what the citizenry wants or will accept. Legislators are thus, in dynamic democratic practice as well as dry constitutional formula, the great connectors between executive branch governors and their citizens. They are the first line of defence in explaining to citizens and voters what the G8 is doing and why. This is a subject that, as with foreign policy more generally, many have long thought of as too specialized and of little concern to voters preoccupied with immediate domestic issues. But the events at the Quebec City summit of the Americas and at Genoa have made it a matter of broader and more active concern. Moreover, the events of 11 September and the spread of the Summit's agenda to embrace once entirely domestic concerns such as health and education have given every citizen in G8 countries an immediate interest in the Summit's work. And in many constituencies across multicultural Canada and in other G8 countries, the challenge of reducing poverty and combating terrorism in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world is of direct relevance to many voters, some of whom are recent arrivals with intense family ties to those they have left behind.

Parliamentarians are, of course, busy people with many existing interparliamentary groups to attend and fearful lest some constituents dismiss their international work as mere junketry or a perk. But the case for the G8 and its core agenda is now sufficiently compelling in the mind of the average voter that the moment to launch a G8 Interparliamentary Group has come. One could wait until the leaders at a Summit endorse the creation of such a body and endow it with an authoritative mandate and direction about how to contribute to the system as a whole. Such a top-down sequence would respect the seminal raison d'être of the G7/8 summit. But domestic democracy is often a bottom-up affair. There are good grounds for getting an earlier start.

The process could thus begin within Canada. Here it would build on the SCFAIT hearings across the country in the spring of 2002 in preparation for its report which called for followup monitoring of the

Kananaskis results. It could take as its private inspiration the Hockin-Simard Committee's work in the summer of 1985 and the record it set for popular engagement and influence in the foreign policy process (Canada 1986). SCFAIT's more recent work on Canadian trade policy provides timely evidence of the valuable contribution that hearings outside of Ottawa can make. Parliamentarians in other G8 countries could be encouraged in parallel efforts. The parliamentary participants could meet together 'at eight' to pool their results and pass them on to leaders at a timely moment prior to, or even on the eve of, Kananaskis. The inaugural meeting of a G8-wide parliamentary gathering could be conveniently hosted in Canada to make it easier for domestically preoccupied congressional representatives and senators from the United States and legislators from Europe and Japan to attend.

5 Generate G8 Study Centres

The fifth step moves beyond politicians to the people, beginning with a strategic élite that the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum (APEC) has long realized can play a critical role in information wars and other tasks. The many thousands of citizens who came at their own expense to Genoa, Okinawa, and other summit sites did so not just to protest, but also to participate in the many 'teach-ins' and conferences sponsored by civil society organizations. Their presence reflects a pent-up demand for greater information and understanding of the issues dealt with at summits, how the G7/8 system is treating those issues, and how it might advance the common cause.

That students and citizens should have to journey to distant summits to acquire such information underscores the inadequacy of existing educational institutions in meeting these needs. If the G7/8 system is indeed emerging as an effective centre of global governance, just as important as the United Nations-Bretton Woods system constructed in 1945, then it warrants commensurate attention from the academic community, in the classroom and in regular research (Kirton 1999). Although there is a wealth of expertise and research on the subject, it is largely episodic and individual, conducted in isolation and diffusely disseminated, rather than a dedicated, continuous enterprise, mounted by teams of researchers and supported by major centres throughout and beyond the G8. It thus lacks the critical mass, cumulative quality, and visibility needed to inform the public, enrich the policy community, and contribute to an intellectual mass that could strengthen the summit system and its major thrusts.

It is curious that the G7/8 still lacks the equivalent of the APEC study centre network. APEC is, like the G7/8, an international institutional system with a transregional membership and comprehensive agenda centred on an annual, plurilateral leaders meeting and supported by a host of ministerial meetings and official working groups. Even without the G7/8's democratic character and commitments, APEC has involved civil society at many levels in its work. The network of APEC study centres is a key element.

(Each member country hosts at least one such centre.) The centres conduct research on APEC and the issues confronting it, contribute to the current APEC agenda, and are available to take on analytical tasks that APEC leaders may chose to entrust to them. Although the centres do not provide an analytic secretariat for APEC, they help deepen the analytic foundation and expert connections of its work in the same way that the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with its large formal secretariat, has long done for the Euro-Atlantic democratic world. The degree of direct government support for, and guidance to, the APEC centres varies considerably, depending in part on the democratic character of individual national regimes.

The circumstances are ripe for equipping the G7/8 with a similar analytic capability and intellectual support group. G8 leaders should announce their support for a network of G8 study centres in each G8 region or member country, offer the initial financial investment to ensure their speedy creation and operation, and suggest the initial research themes on which they would most welcome proposals. These might include establishing relationships with United Nations networks, reducing poverty in Africa, and monitoring the implementation of the G8's own action programme on Africa.

6 Sponsor G8 Scholarships

To build capacity for a future generation of scholarship and to give the current generation of students a much deeper understanding of the G7/8 system, it is important to devise the means by which the best students from within and outside G8 countries can study, on a year-round basis, the G8 community and how it can be enriched. Thus far, G8 efforts have been exceedingly fragile. As part of the Kananaskis "legacy" program, a small investment was commendably left at the local University of Calgary. At the 1998 Birmingham summit, a small group of sponsored high school students came to the summit and conducted study sessions alongside the leaders, with whom they met briefly. The exercise was useful as a photo op to reinforce the G8's new interest in an education agenda, but no lasting legacy - for example, national and international networks of mock G8 summits equivalent to the long-established mock United Nations assemblies and NATO councils came of it. Instead, the year round educational burden has fallen on the regular university and secondary school curricula, where there are many courses on globalization, global governance, and the United Nations from a variety of perspectives but virtually none on the G7/8 system.

The required year-round educational effort must begin with the basics, that is, the most promising students must be given first hand, intensive exposure to the other members of the G8. Because of demographics and longstanding Commonwealth, francophonie, and more recent Fulbright scholarship programmes, Canadian students collectively should have no trouble acquiring a sound understanding of Britain, France, and the United States. Family ties might add Italy and perhaps Germany to the list. But it

cannot be assumed that even the most advanced Canadian university students will have an intimate knowledge, intuitive understanding, or even initial awareness of Japan, Russia, or the European Union as a whole. The same holds for other G8 countries when their students strive to reach across entrenched regional and linguistic divides. Existing bilateral programmes are inadequate to the task, especially as the proliferating G8 system moves to address the global challenges of the twenty first century.

An obvious solution is for the G8 leaders to create a scholarship programme, similar in structure to the Commonwealth, francophonie, and Fulbright programmes, which have long proven their worth. The programme should, in a spirit of outreach, be open to students from non-G8 countries, to enlarge the understanding of the G8 beyond its members and to enrich the ability of those inside to assess the G8's impact on the global community as a whole. The G8 education ministers forum, born on the road to the Okinawa summit of 2000, could be assigned the task of developing such a scholarship programme, in appropriate dialogue with subfederal governments.

7 Educate The Citizenry

The seventh step is to reach out directly to educate students and the citizenry as a whole, with short-term measures designed to meet the immediate information and education demands. A minimal task for the current and subsequent hosting teams is to devise an organized programme of information about G8 issues, institutions, and members that will secure and maintain audience interest and cumulate in a coherent whole.

One attractive vehicle for making such an educational programme readily accessible to many around the world is to place it on the internet, in video, audio, and text form, in as many G8 and world major languages as possible. The site should include a multilingual, organized, semester-long programme of serious teaching and learning. A website that merely tells schoolchildren how to say hello in all summit languages may be a useful start, but it is far from a serious response to the need. Here the major effort made by the Canadian government during the Kananaskis season provides a productive foundation on which to build. This included a state-of the art web site, a program for secondary school teachers, and financial support for an internet-based, university level course, G8 Online. Producing similar timely, well-tailored materials for Evian, and doing so in all the G8's languages, is the next obvious, but still outstanding step.

8 Massage The Media

The seventh step is to massage, as well as manage the media. Most of the world learns about the G7/8 through the media, overwhelmingly from the coverage of and at annual summits. The result can be singularly limited. At Genoa, Jean Chrétien publicly complained about the media's fascination with pictures

of a single burning car. When word was first heard of the death of an anarchist, virtually all of the 3,000 assembled media abandoned their coverage of the summit to focus on that single event. The collective statement of regret about the death issued by the leaders was essentially inaudible and invisible against the full might of the media and the deluge of words and images they produced.

Newsworthy events for the mainstream media will always put bodies, bullets, bombs, and blood over politicians talking and issuing co-operative communiqués. Indeed, the élite of the summit media corps, from the United States White House press corps to their equivalents in other G8 countries, come to the summit in part on an 'assassination watch,' in case their leader is assaulted and does not survive. In the face of such facts, some summit managers are occasionally tempted to limit media access in ways that might facilitate media management and communications strategy.

Such instincts, as Rambouillet proved, are at best a waste of effort and at worst counterproductive. It is inconceivable that the public or the press in eight major democratic polities and throughout Europe would allow their leaders to gather for two or three days of public business, of potentially the highest importance, without a media presence operating with sufficient freedom to record and report on the event rapidly and accurately. The Kananaskis approach of allowing only a few pool journalists near the Summit site, and having only the host government rather than each national delegation brief the media throughout the Summit, predictably produced a media with little to cover but the complaints of civil society critics, and strange herd mentality stories about the Kananaskis agenda being "hijacked" by a Middle East initiative unveiled in a speech in Washington, D.C. a few days before. It was not surprising that media judgement of the Kananaskis achievements were far more negative than more scientific analyses showed.

If a minimum democratic duty is transparency, then pondering ways to restrict media access is akin to shooting oneself in the mouth. And for the leaders themselves, limiting media access would be immensely counterproductive, because it would emasculate much of the unique power of the summit. The summit offers a singular occasion for leaders - members of the world's loneliest profession - to deliberate privately and share their deepest hopes, fears, and ideas, far from the madding media and masses. But it also provides a powerful collective 'bully pulpit' from which to set new directions for the global community - to highlight new challenges, themes, issues, and interconnections and to articulate new norms and principles in response. That it can do so is suggested by the literature on compliance with summit commitments. Leaders can get desired welfare outcomes even without mobilizing their own policy instruments to implement actions themselves (Von Furstenberg and Daniels 1991). In short, governments, organizations, and societies can and will respond on their own, if only they know the direction in which G7/8 leaders want them to go. An essential part of the dynamic, and the broader process of monitoring and mobilizing pressure to ensure compliance with even hard summit commitments, is to have the media on hand to give leaders the global

audience they need to get their collective message out and to help ensure that they and their partners live up to the promises made.

That is why since the beginning leaders have basked in the glow of media attention, whether from the 400 who gathered at Rambouillet in November 1975 or the more than 10,000, largely Japanese, accredited at Okinawa in 2000. The physical care and feeding of the attending media corps, as much as the content of the communications strategy aimed at them, is vital. At Denver in 1997 the media centre was equipped with on-site massage facilities - a useful therapy rather than a frivolous luxury for those who must work, often round the clock, for three days straight to get their information in and their messages out through all the time zones around the world. Getting enough information to deliver a useful and credible message can be a major challenge and explains why, at the margins, the media rush to cover such relatively easy alternatives as burning cars, protests, and death in the street.

To combat such tendencies, an open, easily accessible, adequately equipped media centre, fully functioning round-the-clock, is essential. The Kananaskis approach of closing portions of the facility when the local service providers reach their normal break times or at night is an act of cultural insensitivity that cripples the ability of G8 governors to get their message out. Global civil society activists with their hundreds of websites and more traditional media outlets do not take half or more of the summit off.

There is also a need for more adequate briefings, the frequency and quality of which have declined at summits of late. Following the Italian example, the process could start well before the summit with the release to the public of the major thematic paper prepared to guide summit deliberations. Following the historic leadership of Canadian sherpa Robert Fowler on the road to Kananaskis, extensive briefings by sherpas across the G8 countries and in national and media capitals in the week or two prior to the summit could contribute much. In this task, G8 ministers and eladers should also play their full part. The host and other countries should assume the burden, traditionally borne by the Japanese and European Union, of providing on-site briefings immediately before the summit opens in which they outline what they expect to achieve. Documents should be available far enough in advance to allow the media to read and to digest them. Briefings by the host and all members after every working session and meal should be the norm. They should be timed and spaced to allow even small media contingents to attend as many as possible, to ensure that they are not being ‘spun’ by a single source.

The briefings should also be broadcast and webcast to the world in real time, with a transcription available shortly after. This would allow those busy at concurrent briefings to access all briefings by archived video. It would reduce the number of journalists who have to be present at each briefing or even at the summit itself. It would also enable the whole world to hear the message more directly, without the filter of the media corps with their own and their editors’ particular preoccupations at the time. Transcriptions of the webcasts would enrich, broaden, and diversify the public record of G8 summits. Traditionally only the

United States can be counted on to provide such transcripts to all of the attending media corps, and then only those briefings given by United States government spokespersons. Transcriptions on the web would allow those on the other side of the digital divide, equipped with only first generation internet-computer facilities, to access the information as readily as their privileged webcast counterparts. Together, this low cost, non-intrusive innovation would do much to make the summit available to the wider world.

9 Clarify The Communiqué

The next step is to clarify the communiqué to give it greater credibility and to make it intelligible to all who have a stake in what it says. At the summit, the briefing programme centres around hints about the final communiqué, while the summit itself culminates with its public presentation, the ultimate moment in the great drama of every G7/8 summit. Not surprisingly, the communiqué has been the subject of intense debate since the beginning: what should it contain; should it even exist?

The first step is to keep the communiqué, as a minimum transparency measure, to inform citizens about the decisions of their democratically elected leaders, even if those citizens cannot participate in the deliberations that produce it. Despite the comforting rhetoric that the G8 is merely a caucus-like 'ginger group' rather than a global directoire (Baker 2000), the reality is that the leaders have generated a large and growing number of ambitious and significant communiqué-encoded commitments in recent years, and what is more they have complied with them to a rising and high degree. In short, communiqués and the commitments they codify do count.

Moreover, communiqués are consumed by a vast audience. Despite the prevailing cynical folklore, it is simply not true that more people are involved in preparing the communiqués than in reading them when they are unveiled. From among the 3,000 media on site at Genoa, the number who "hit" the relevant portion of the websites where the communiqués are mounted confirm that the communiqués receive at least a passing glance from millions around the world. Their contents may not always be reported in approving detail by the media or scrutinized by the mass public, but officials use them as high-level authoritative weapons to help get what they want. Here the problem is not with the inattentiveness of the audience but with the quality of the product.

Communiqués should be written with a clarity and concreteness that make them comprehensible to the average citizen. They should be more action oriented and should whenever possible specify targets and timetables for accomplishing what the leaders say they want done. They should also be more honest in identifying new or enhanced promises instead of merely repeating promises from previous years. They should acknowledge frankly where and why last year's promises were not kept. If leaders do not provide their own conscientious, self-correcting capacity and critique, then they cannot blame civil society protesters

for claiming for themselves alone this part of the democratic turf. One solution, used at the Quebec City summit of the Americas and in part by past G7/8 summits, is to publish with the crisp, clear communiqué a detailed action plan containing specifics of what the leaders intend to accomplish. Another useful addition, following the tentative start made by G8 foreign ministers in 2001 on the conflict prevention agenda, would be to release, on the eve of or at the summit, a report card on last year's commitments, what they meant in practice, and to what extent and how they were kept. What most assuredly will not work is to move back to the world of secret agreements secretly arrived at, to adopt Ronald Reagan's idea of scrapping the carefully negotiated, leader-endorsed, enriched, and adjusted communiqué in favour of a brief, incomplete, vague statement thrown together from nothing on the summit's last night. With its impressive deluge of detailed documentation from the leaders, Kananaskis avoided this danger. But still outstanding is the need for more precision and implementation monitoring, building on Canada's effort when its year as host in 1995 came to an end.

10. Include Civil Society On-Site

The tenth step is to bring civil society into the summit itself, as the summit of the Americas did in Quebec City and as the G8 started to do at Okinawa in 2000. A multi-stakeholder civil society forum, led by and involving parliamentarians, could meet simultaneously with the leaders, or, with minimal overlap, just prior to and at the start of the summit if some fear lingers that their presence would detract from the media limelight in which the leaders want to bask alone. Whatever the precise formula, the media and the leaders interested in civil society views would have something to report on and to respond to other than those shouting slogans on the streets outside.

An important part of this innovation would be for the G8 leaders collectively, and not just the host leader or others at their individual discretion, to meet with the leaders of the civil society forum. If the leaders of Canada, the United States, Japan, and Russia can find the time at their APEC sessions to meet with business leaders in the APEC Business Forum, they can surely find time as part of a standard-sized G8 summit to meet with civil society leaders of a much more inclusive, multi-stakeholder sort. Even as they properly reach out to leaders of international organizations and non-member countries at the start of their summit, G8 leaders should also reach down to their own citizens, to hear at first hand their views and to explain the desires, strategies, and constraints they as leaders bring to the summit.

The admirable initiative of Canadian foreign minister William Graham in coming to Calgary to participate in the government-funded G6B "People's Summit" conference is a minimum step forward relative to the need. The 2003 Summit offers an excellent opportunity to do better, for leaders should be

arriving at Evian straight from a G8-EU Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, whose largely ceremonial agenda allows ample time for meaningful democratic citizen-democratic leader dialogue.

11. Mobilize The Ministerials

If there remain unavoidable limits to direct civil society participation at the Summits, then the many ministerial meetings that have emerged in the leadup to the Summit offer an appealing opportunity for a sustained, focused, policy-sensitive dialogue between popularly elected G8 governors and civil society representatives interested in realistic policy change. The efforts made in this direction at the spring 2002 Environment Ministers meeting in Banff offer a promising start. As the host of the 2002 G8 pre-Summit foreign ministers meeting in Whistler, B.C., William Graham took the initiative to meet for a dialogue with those few civil society activists who had come to protest. With such leadership from a traditionally closed foreign policy areas, there is no excuse for G8 ministerial meetings in more open policy areas, from development to health, to follow in the foreign ministers and environment ministers lead.

Conclusion

In his concluding news conference at the end of the first summit Canada attended, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau captured the essential purpose of the G7/8: 'the success of these conferences are ... not to be judged by the solution of individual economic problems or by the setting up of new institutions or by the agreement on any particular resolution. Their success will be judged by whether we can influence the behaviour of people in our democracies and perhaps even as important the behaviour of people on the outside who are watching us, in a way in which they will have confidence that our type of economic and political freedom permits us to solve problems" (Trudeau 1976). Trudeau and his colleagues, in the first generation of G7 summitry and those that followed, succeeded in this task. They solved the crisis of governability and stagflation, stopped Eurocommunism within the G7 community, waged the new cold war of the early 1980s, and set the stage for the democratic revolution in Russia, central and eastern Europe, and elsewhere in the 1990s. They did so by reaching downward to their own citizens and outward to those in the global community, with dialogue and persuasion, to give their decisions the sensitivity, understanding, and legitimacy they needed for maximum effect.

The twenty-first century has bred a novel and equally formidable set of challenges for the third generation of G8 leaders. But it has also brought new instruments of communication and engagement and new constituencies of civil society allies to help them meet the challenge. It remains to be seen if Chrétien and his contemporaries will be as inventive as Trudeau and his generation were in mobilizing these

instruments to secure equal success. Their choice will do much to determine if the Summits of the G8's fifth cycle show a summit in retreat or as a summit reaching out.

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