

## 11. Canada's G7/G8 Diplomacy and Approach to Kananaskis

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I'm John Kirton, Director of the G8 Research Group at the University of Toronto in Canada and your lead instructor for G8 Online 2002.

In this session, "Canada's G7/G8 Diplomacy and Approach to Kananaskis," we explore Canada's role and the results of its diplomacy within the G7/G8, and Canada's approach to the Kananaskis Summit this year.

Canada's diplomacy within the G7/G8 has long been a subject of considerable debate. Those wedded to the **liberal-internationalist** tradition see Canada as a middle power, once again practicing the venerable *diplomacy of constraint*. Thus, in ways implied by the models of **international institutionalism** and **American leadership**, Canada within the G7 combines with others, mediates differences among others and builds up the G7/G8 institution in order to contain the more powerful United States (Stairs 1972).

However, others see a satellite Canada, in **peripheral dependant** fashion, abandoning United Nations' **multilateralism** to pursue the *diplomacy of acquiescence* within the G8. Here Canada adopts the **false new consensus** of the G7's neo-liberal values in return for the illusion of influence and the superficial pleasure of "being there" to bask in the limelight with the truly great. Still others assert that, in a G8 that is a **concert of equals**, Canada is a principal power that successfully practices the *diplomacy of concert* (Kirton 1995).

Indeed, in *Canada in the World*, Canada's 1995 statement of its foreign policy priorities, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's government claimed: "Canada can further its global interests better than any other country through its active membership in key international groupings, for example, hosting the G-7 Summit." Amidst these competing claims of the diplomacy of constraint, the diplomacy of acquiescence and

the diplomacy of concert, which role does Canada in fact play in the G8?

In this lecture I argue that since the start, but with increasing strength and success over the years, Canada has largely practised the diplomacy of concert. Based on its distinctive national values and national interests, Canada has offered its own positions and initiatives. It has allied with any other member to advance its cause. Often it has prevailed, even when the United States and most other members have stood against it at the start. Such a pattern of diplomacy may seem strange to those who see Canada as only a small, penetrated satellite or a mere middle power needing broad **multilateralism** to get by in a dangerous world. But it is indeed possible for Canada, as a principal power, to be a full member of an effective concert of equals, where detailed differences in capabilities among members are offset by their shared sense of responsibility for offering global leadership, by their common democratic convictions and by their domestic democratic accountability as eight popularly elected and politically accomplished individuals that the world looks to for leadership in uncertain times.

### A. Canada's Summit Diplomacy, 1975–2001

Since Canada first started practising Summit diplomacy in the lead-up to the first G7 gathering at Rambouillet, France, in November 1975, it has performed as an equal principal power, operating in ways that even the most powerful Summit members do. This has meant that Canada has occasionally had to mediate differences among members. For example, in 1989 Canada sought to find a compromise between a France that wanted to invite several developing country leaders to its Paris Summit and a United States that wanted none at all to come. Canada has also had, with varying

degrees of reluctance, to accept others' Summit initiatives, even when they caused political difficulty back home. For example, as a result of his attendance at the 1978 Bonn Summit, Liberal prime minister Pierre Trudeau, first elected as Prime Minister in 1968, came back home and cut government spending in ways that may have contributed to his party's defeat in the general election of 1979. In 1979, his successor, Joe Clark (from Canada's Progressive Conservative party) returned from the Tokyo Summit to raise gas taxes in Canada, a move that led to the defeat of his minority government in Parliament and his party's defeat in the general election that followed.

On the whole, however, as an equal principal power Canada has advanced initiatives of its own. Despite its physical absence from the first Summit at Rambouillet, Canada has come as a full member to every Summit since. In 1986, Canada and Italy joined the new G7 finance ministers' forum that soon replaced the former G5. Canada has been a full member of every G7/G8 institution since.

Canada has brought to the G7 its own agenda and approach, which flow directly from its distinctive national values at home. Canada has not been satisfied with a **United Nations Security Council** dominated by the Permanent Five, nuclear-armed, traditional military powers. Supported by its values of **anti-militarism** and **multiculturalism**, Canada has sought to develop the G7/G8 as a political and security institution, with an emphasis on nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, human security, conflict prevention and regional security where the lives of minorities are at stake. In this quest, Japan, Germany and Italy have been Canada's closest soul mates. Similarly, Canada's **egalitarianism** and **environmentalism** have led it to emphasize **north-south development issues**, along with France, and environmental protection, along with Germany. Canada's commitment to multiculturalism and the rights of minorities have led it, along with

France, to emphasize human rights. It did so most clearly during government of Progressive Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney between 1985 and 1992, with its advocacy of harsh Summit sanctions against apartheid in South Africa and against the People's Republic of China for its massacre of unarmed students in Tiananmen Square.

Canada's distinctive values, determination and willingness to join with partners beyond its World War Two allies have led to some important Summit achievements. In addition to those just noted, these include Canada's initiative to have the Summit take effective action against aircraft hijacking in 1978, to help create the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992 and the United Nations Agreement on High Seas Overfishing and Straddling Stocks in 1995. Consistent with Canada's economic *openness*, Prime Minister Kim Campbell helped lead the 1993 Tokyo Summit to complete the long overdue Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and create the new **World Trade Organization**. As these Canadian achievements indicate, often G7/G8 leadership is necessary in order to reform and establish the broader multilateral, UN-based institutions that are needed to govern the global community in our rapidly globalizing age.

#### **B. Canada's Approach to Kananaskis 2002**

In keeping with this tradition, for the 2002 Kananaskis Summit, Canada as host has designed a Summit of retreat, of reaching out, and of real results. Jean Chrétien chose to hold the Summit, for the first time ever, in western Canada, in a secure, serene, remote mountain retreat with few officials, media and ceremonial distractions and with maximum opportunity for the leaders to engage informally in a short period of time. For participants, Canada is reaching out to involve, for the first time ever, the Prime Minister of Spain and the leaders of several key African countries, as an integral part

of the G8 Summit itself. This extended reach, supporting Canada's core value of **globalism**, is also evident in Canada's agenda, of poverty reduction in Africa, combating global terrorism and sustaining global growth. For Kananaskis, as for the first Summit hosted by Canada at the secluded Château Montebello in Quebec in 1981, the focus will be on a new north-south bargain that will command the agreement of all in the north, including the new Republican party President in the United States. In 2002, the key Kananaskis challenge is how to design a new paradigm for development with Canada's African partners — and an action plan to deliver it — ones that might succeed where the predominant approach of the past half-century has manifestly failed.

Thus far, the products from the innovative preparatory process and the downpayments already delivered on the road to Kananaskis suggest that there is a good chance the leaders can pull this new deal off. But as Summits, and particularly those hosted by Canada, are for the leaders themselves to determine and deliver on site, we much watch and wait as the Summit unfolds to see if it will produce real and historic results.

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## Discussion Questions

1. How much has Canada, as a good liberal internationalist, pursued compromise, consensus and constraint within the G7/G8, and what difference have its efforts in this regard made?
2. At the Summit where has Canada simply supported the United States, and as such made a difference to the Summit's outcome, as the American leadership model (which demands support from a "strong" second member) would seem to deny?
3. How does Canada's G7/G8 Summit diplomacy shift when it is led by Liberal party prime ministers rather than Progressive Conservative prime ministers, or do Canadian national interests and distinctive national values dominate Canada's approach all the time?
4. Does Canada have any natural allies it tends to align with in the G7/G8 year after year? If so, which countries and why?
5. Which of Canada's distinctive national values is most consistently reflected in its G7/G8 diplomacy?

## Quiz

1. Canada was represented at the 1979 Tokyo Summit by Prime Minister:
  - a. Pierre Trudeau
  - b. Brian Mulroney
  - c. Joe Clark
  - d. Kim Campbell
2. Canada is seen as a middle power by those in the theoretical tradition of
  - a. liberal-institutionalism
  - b. peripheral dependence
  - c. complex neo-realism
  - d. concert equality
3. At the annual G7/G8 Summit, Canada has consistently emphasized issues of:
  - a. health care
  - b. transnational crime
  - c. north-south development
  - d. international hockey
4. Which political party did Joe Clark represent as Canadian Prime Minister in 1979?
  - a. Progressive Conservative
  - b. Canadian Alliance
  - c. Liberal Party
  - d. New Democratic Party
5. Canada joined the new G7 finance ministers forum in:
  - a. 1975
  - b. 1976
  - c. 1986
  - d. 1995
6. Canada hosted its first Summit, in 1981, at the:
  - a. Château de Versailles
  - b. Château de Rambouillet
  - c. Château Montebello
  - d. Casa Loma