

21. Prospects for Kananaskis

John Kirton

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

In today's session, "Prospects for Kananaskis," we put our knowledge of the G8 to work, to estimate how successful the Kananaskis Summit is likely to be on June 26–27.

There are several ways we can assemble our judgements of what the prospects for Kananaskis are.

First, we can listen to those inside the preparatory process and evaluate how optimistic these insiders seem to be about a successful result. Thus far, even amidst the frantic pace of final preparations, those closest to the centre seem to be pretty upbeat about the event. We will have to see if any last-minute crisis erupts to frustrate their carefully laid plans.

Second, we can look at what has already been accomplished in the preparatory process and project ahead on this basis to estimate how things will stand at the Summit's end. For example, we note that Canada's initial new CA\$500 million contribution in **official development assistance** (ODA) for African development has already been joined by contributions ten times as large from the United States and from Europe. We also observe that the African leaders critical for making Kananaskis a success have already stood with their new principles and their new G8 partners in opposing their neighbour Robert Mugabe's rigging of his election in Zimbabwe this spring. We can wait to see if Canada's willingness to open its textile and other markets to the exports of developing African countries will inspire the United States and Japan to do so as well, and if African leaders will show the patience that dealing with the complex American and Japanese political systems sometimes demands.

Third, we can look at how the past few Summits have done and extrapolate from this recent past to estimate how successful Kananaskis is likely to be. The solid performances of Cologne 1999, Okinawa 2000 and Genoa 2001, in overall achievements, number of commitments and faithful compliance, suggest that Kananaskis should be a productive gathering as well.

Finally, we can mobilize our different models of what causes a Summit to be successful, look for the evidence that each model points to and see if the current facts point to failure or success.

Here those devoted to the **false new consensus** model would ask if the current G8 leaders are all covered by globalization, and feel themselves unable to cope with the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, with the economic slowdown that followed, and with an African continent that has been left out of the benefits globalization can bring. On the face of it, by choosing to focus on precisely these three issues at their Summit and by highlighting the highly ambitious task of poverty reduction in Africa, the current G8 leaders seem to be very confident of their capacity to control market and social forces, and thus effectively govern a rapidly globalizing world.

Adherents of the **American leadership** model would ask how successful Canada has been in constructing a Summit that anticipates the desires of its American neighbour, so that President George W. Bush will arrive able and eager to take charge. They would point out that in the leadup to Kananaskis, Canada as host agreed to hold a rare G8 energy ministers meeting and allowed the United States to co-host it in Detroit. This was in keeping with Bush's call for such a gathering in the U.S. presidential election campaign. For the main event, Canada's

choice of a short, informal Summit in Alberta, Canada's oil and ranch capital, should make George Bush feel right at home. Moreover, the themes of combating terrorism and sustaining growth are close to his heart. But Jean Chrétien's determination to stick with African development as the centerpiece subject, even after September 11th, means that at Kananaskis America will be asked to adjust as well as to lead.

Those following the model of **democratic institutionalism** would ask how well the network of G8 institutions has been developed and put to work in the leadup to the event. They would be encouraged by how quickly the G8 system sprang to life in the immediate aftermath of September 11th, by the many G7 and G8 ministerial meetings on the road to Kananaskis, and by the vitality of the dense web of G8 working groups. But they would also doubt that a G8 informally reaching out to involve African leaders at the Summit could succeed on a complex and challenging subject — African development — that the well-established and well-equipped United Nations has long claimed as its own. Far better, they would think, to leave poverty reduction in Africa to the UN and to its Summits, such as that for financing development mounted in March in Monterrey, Mexico.

In this lecture, I argue that the **concert equality** model provides the best understanding of the G8 Summit system, and that it strongly suggests that Kananaskis will be a significant success. Our previous lectures have proven that this model best explains the Summit's past record of overall co-operation and compliance, and its performance in the three key issues areas the Kananaskis Summit is focusing upon. The Summit's smaller members, Canada and Britain, are currently showing rapid economic growth and global reach with their combat troops in Afghanistan, and thus equalizing capabilities within the G8 club. America's awareness of its vulnerability in the wake of September 11th further suggests that a mood of equality will prevail. Even with the attend-

ance of African leaders, Kananaskis will still be a Summit of constricted participation, with no add-on meetings to distract G8 leaders or slow things down. This Summit is giving centre stage to its common democratic purposes by highlighting good governance, the rule of law, individual liberties and social advancement within African countries as the foundation on which their development will be based. And, with no ministers or large delegations or media corps on site, this Summit will allow popularly elected leaders maximum time to be alone to give these democratic values a new and lasting life.

A. The Kananaskis G8's New Equality

We know from earlier lectures and research that Summits work well when they combine *collectively predominant capabilities* for global governance, when each G8 member contributes *equal capabilities*, and when all share a sense of global responsibility and of *equal vulnerability* if they do not deal with the challenges that globalization brings. For Kananaskis, as never before, the G8 leaders feel a common sense of responsibility for providing leadership in global governance in a rapidly changing world. The 1997–99 global financial crises ended the hope that the energetic emerging economies outside the G8 would soon surpass the slowing societies within. The September 11th terrorist attacks on America's economic and political capitals again showed how even the G8's most powerful member was vulnerable to threats flowing in from beyond the G8. With once struggling and suspicious Russia having led the G8 in economic growth for the past few years — and now being a critical ally in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan — it is clear that even the G8's weakest member is indispensable for the prosperity and security of all. And with Summit host Canada now shaping up to be the G7 growth leader this year, it should have the capabilities, credibility and self-confidence to lead and forge agreement in ambitious ways.

B. The Kananaskis G8's Comprehensive Constricted Participation

Summits also work well when they have *constricted participation* — and thus a minimum number of speakers needing airtime, fewer divergent views to be reconciled, and fewer individuals who can veto a consensus as it takes shape. For the first time in many years, the G8 leaders will not have any on-site pre-Summit or post-Summit meetings with ad hoc participants. They will thus be fully free to focus on their own work among themselves. Moreover, for the first time in Summit history, a small select group of core African leaders will be join them as full partners at the Summit itself. This new status will enable the Summit to reach out more comprehensively as never before to offer inclusive and sensitive global governance in a diverse world. These outside leaders will not be add-ons or second class citizens but fully integrated into the Summit itself — a powerful physical expression of what a **New Partnership for Africa's Development** (NEPAD) really means.

The challenge here will be to devise ways of keeping this partnership alive at the leaders' level after Kananaskis, to ensure that the Kananaskis commitments are complied with in ways accepted by all the authors. Because additions and adjustments to NEPAD will be required as part of a dynamic process, ways must be found for these leaders and their personal representatives to come together again after their 30 hours together at Kananaskis in June.

C. The Kananaskis G8's Common Democratic Purpose

Summits are also most successful when their agenda and anticipated agreements and actions are closest to the *common democratic purposes* that inspired the institution's birth. Kananaskis will do this to an exceptional degree, in regard to its centrepiece deliverable, for to reduce poverty in Africa it will insist on the prerequisites of good governance, the rule

of law, individual liberties and social advancement within African countries themselves.

The challenge will be to bring democracy more directly to concerned citizens, both within the G8 and Africa itself. It will be useful to engage civil society in G8 countries in the ongoing design, delivery and monitoring of NEPAD's "northern" part of the bargain, and to do so more directly than they have been thus far. And it will be even more important to engage civil society in Africa on the "southern" side, because their understanding, sense of ownership and initiative will be critical to NEPAD's success.

D. The Kananaskis G8's Political Control by Popularly Elected Leaders

Finally, G8 Summits perform best when they are *politically controlled by popularly elected leaders* — ones who are there not just to go through the motions, sign prescribed communiqués or pose for photos but also to go where no mere official or portfolio minister has ever gone before or can go alone. Summits must "let leaders be leaders" and do so in the particular style preferred by each leader's personality. With no ministers, large delegations or media multitudes on the Summit site, Kananaskis should allow democratically elected leaders maximum time to be alone to deliberate, set new directions and take far-reaching decisions all their own. Importantly, their new African partners are themselves popularly elected leaders and thus political soul mates — the face of the new Africa as much as the absent Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe is the mug shot of the old.

But if their lonely deliberations, new directions and decisions are to be well designed and make a real difference, popularly elected leaders need the citizens who elected them to be engaged as well. They need them to provide information and input, to comprehend the ultimate destination that is desired, to consider the complexities and compelling logic carefully, and thus be inspired to act on their own

to help their leaders reach the common goal. Perhaps the greatest challenge for the leaders at Kananaskis is to invent innovative ways to ensure that at their isolated executive retreat in the mountains, the information comes in and the media takes the message out, with the independence, integrity and intricate detail that it deserves.

Further Readings

Kirton, John (2002), "G8 Preview: Retreating to Reach Out for Real Results at Kananaskis 2002." Paper given at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, March 15 <www.g7.utoronto.ca/g7/scholar/kirton2002/csis2002.html> (May 2002).

Kirton, John (2002). "Guess Who Is Coming to Kananaskis," *International Journal* 57(1) <www.g8.utoronto.ca/g7/scholar/kirton2002/020507.pdf> (May 2002).

Discussion Questions

1. How successful do you think the Kananaskis Summit will be and why? Do your particular reasons — your view of what causes a Summit to be successful — suggest we need to discard, modify or replace and or all of the existing models we have?
2. How much does the success of a Summit depend on the careful preparations of the host government, and the skill and will of the host leader at the Summit itself? What do these factors suggest about the likely success of Kananaskis?
3. When applied to Canada's year as host, do the different methods of estimating Summit success all point in the same direction? If not, which method would you rely on most to determine the prospects for Kananaskis and why?
4. With concerns for security, particularly following violent incidences at recent meetings of global policy makers, the location of the summit was moved to remote Kananaskis, Alberta. Anti-globalists argue that this move alone demonstrates the G8's disregard for the citizen. How can the G8 leaders, more actively draw from their opponents and the general public? How necessary is positive press surrounding this years' summit?

Quiz

1. Where was the G8 energy ministers meeting held in 2002?
 - a. Detroit, U.S.
 - b. Vancouver, Canada
 - c. Toronto, Canada
 - d. Calgary, Canada
2. Robert Mugabe is the leader of which country?
 - a. Nigeria
 - b. Zimbabwe
 - c. Germany
 - d. South Africa
3. Which country has been the G8 growth leader in recent years?
 - a. Russia
 - b. United States
 - c. Japan
 - d. Germany
4. Which of the following countries has expressed a willingness to open its markets to the textile exports of Africa?
 - a. Canada
 - b. Japan
 - c. United States
 - d. Great Britain
5. Canada recently committed CA\$500 million, and was followed by other G8 nations with even larger donations, for what purpose?
 - a. Upgrade elections equipment and procedures in Africa
 - b. Allow African leaders to prepare for, and attend, the 2002 Kananaskis Summit
 - c. Repair and develop the infrastructure of Afghanistan
 - d. Official development assistance for African nations