

## 26. Toward the Fifth Summit Cycle

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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 this final session, "Toward the Fifth Summit Cycle," we assess what the G8 Summit has accomplished during its fourth seven-year cycle, which concluded at Kananaskis in 2002. On this basis we estimate how the G8 is likely to evolve at the Summit in France the following year and in the fifth cycle of summitry that lies ahead.

Early analyses of the results and significance of the Kananaskis Summit offer four competing conceptions of how G8 summitry will unfold. One school of thought seems stuck on French president Jacques Chirac's comments, issued after the European Union's Seville Summit and just before the Kananaskis G8, that in the future leaders should meet electronically, by videoconference, rather than in person, face to face. Bolstered by the torrent of criticism about the inadequacy of the G8's Africa Action Plan, these observers imply that Kananaskis marked the end of an era, with the G8 destined to peter out as an effective centre of global governance in the years ahead (Cerretelli 2002). A second school suggests that Kananaskis merely confirmed the G8 status quo. Its adherents argue that such summits are still worth doing, but will make a real difference only if their promises are kept to a greater degree than they have been in the past. A third school took its text from Chirac's praise at the conclusion of the Kananaskis Summit for the small, secluded, informal, substantive summit that the Canadians had successfully designed and delivered. It argued that G8 Summits had a promising future, if one as a closed plutocracy needed for global economic governance in a troubled world. Finally, a fourth school pointed to the Kananaskis decision to make Russia a full member and bring the Afri-

cans to the table as equals. It suggested that the G8 was destined to become the epicentre of global governance, with the values and processes of open democracy and global partnership at its core.

In this concluding lecture of G8 Online 2002, I argue that the G8 will continue to emerge as the effective centre of global governance, with open democracy and global partnership as the foundation for its institutional development as well as ideological purpose in the years ahead. The G8's growing achievements during its fourth cycle from 1996 to 2002 have given the G8 the momentum, self-confidence and credibility to propel it into the future on this expansive trajectory. Prospects for the Summit hosted by France in 2003 promise to keep the G8 on this course. And, over the longer term, the G8 could easily realize this potential — but only if it makes the right decisions on some critical issues that it will confront over the next cycle that culminates when Canada hosts again in 2010.

### **A. The Momentum of the Fourth Cycle**

During its fourth cycle from 1996 to 2002, the G7/G8 Summit developed considerable momentum in emerging as an open, inclusive democratic partnership for effective global governance for the 21st century. The grades awarded by Nicolas Bayne (2002) for achievement at the annual Summit reached a historically high average of B in the fourth cycle, with the most recent five Summits on an unprecedented streak of B or B+ grades. The average number of concrete commitments produced at each annual Summit has risen steadily, from 35 in the first cycle (1975–1981), through 45 in the second cycle (1981–1988), to 59 in the third cycle (1989–1995) to the great leap forward of 131 in the fourth cycle (1996–2002). The

191 commitments produced by Kananaskis was the highest total in the 28 years of Summit history, with the second highest total generated by Okinawa's 169 commitments two years before (Walkom 2002). It is thus this cadence of Okinawa and Kananaskis, rather than the interruption of Genoa, with 58 commitments in 2001, that shows how 21st-century G8 summitry will unfold.

On the critical question of whether commitments are complied with, that is, whether promises made are promises kept, the G8 Summits are also on the rise. On a scale of -100% to +100%, the average compliance with G8 commitments has risen from +32% during the first two cycles, to 43% in the last two cycles, with Okinawa at +81% and Genoa at +50% pointing the way ahead. There has also been an ever-deepening institutionalization of the G7/G8. There were no stand-alone ministerial forums created during the first cycle, but three during the second cycle, four during the third cycle, and four during the fourth cycle. Perhaps most striking has been the philosophic proliferation of the G7/G8's ambitions. Its seminal task of globally promoting open democracy, individual liberty and social advancement has expanded during the fourth cycle to the task of governing globalization, and doing so in socially sensitive and equitably shared ways. It was this progression that led the G8 to its new partnership with Africa at the culmination of the Kananaskis Summit and the fourth cycle of summitry in 2002.

### **B. Prospects for France 2003**

Already, the 2003 Summit in France promises to maintain the momentum of the fourth cycle, as fine-tuned at Kananaskis in 2002. Host Jacques Chirac has confirmed he will continue the Canadian model of a small, informal, substantive, leaders-driven Summit. He will again centre it on a single theme, with African development once more serving as the choice. By inviting the remaining G8 leaders to an EU-Russian Summit in St. Petersburg the day

before the G8 itself opens, he is moving to bring more leaders from the democratic west, as Kananaskis did from the democratic east and south, into a direct connection with the G8.

Moreover, the French Summit is already assured of giving Kananaskis a continuity and legacy denied to Halifax in 1995 after France took the reins in 1996. By specifying a "built in" agenda, the leaders at Kananaskis assured that they would return next year to deal with the implementation of their Africa Action Plan, the progress, guidelines, and projects of The G8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, and co-operative G8 action on transport security. To institutionalize such continuity, the leaders established several G8 bodies: a second year of work for their personal representatives for Africa, a mechanism to review the global partnership each year, a new G8 Nuclear Safety and Security Group, and experts on transport security who would receive direction from G8 leaders conducting a semi-annual review. Together these additions suggested that France has lost much of its historic aversion to the "institutionalization" of the Summit system. And for the long-term future, Kananaskis specified a Summit hosting order not just for the year ahead, as had been traditional, but for the next eight years until 2010. The shadow of the future thus lengthened a great deal for an institution that seems determined to grow rather than stay the same or waste away.

### **C. The Long-Term Potential and Challenges**

However, to realize the full potential of the ambitious course on which it is now set, the G8 leaders will have to confront and successfully surmount several critical challenges in the fifth cycle of summitry that lies ahead.

The first concerns more inclusive participation, building on the inclusion or connection of leaders from the democratic east, south and west already in store. Here the minimum step is to invite the African leaders at Kananaskis to return to the Summit, to be joined by the major

democratic powers from other regions of the developing world. While it may be too much to expect a return to the “Paris dinner club” created by France in 1989, or a new leaders-level G20, the inclusion of rapidly growing, relentlessly democratic India is a compelling call over the next eight years (Kirton, Daniels and Freytag 2001). A good start could be made in 2003, by inviting India to participate in its role as chair of the G20 that year.

Such a rationale would help solve the major outstanding challenge regarding the G8’s Summit agenda — its need to deal more deeply with core economic and financial issues than Kananaskis did, even amidst the major achievements in the development and political security domains that the Summit must address. Indeed, Kananaskis was held as “Enronitis” was contagiously spreading throughout corporate America, as the once mighty U.S. dollar was plummeting and as the financial crisis in Argentina was spreading to Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil and Venezuela and affecting distant Turkey and Russia as well. There was thus some risk that Kananaskis could go down in Summit history much like the last G8 Summit held in the Rocky Mountains — Denver in 1997 — a Summit so preoccupied with Russia and Africa that it failed to detect and prevent an economic crisis that started in Thailand a mere three weeks after the Summit took place.

Looking ahead, the already attenuated G7 leaders meeting at Kananaskis is destined progressively to wither away as the deadline for a Russian-hosted all-G8 in 2006 draws nigh. With it could go any serious economic and finance agenda, unless a major effort is mounted to bring the Russians up to speed as full contributors, and have all leaders engage in this complex field. The obvious solution is for the leaders to give themselves more time, by moving away from Kananaskis’s sleep-deprived 30-hour marathon and back to a normal Summit spread over three days.

A longer and more leisurely Summit would have the added advantage of allowing the lead-

ers to connect personally with **civil society**, as the Japanese host did at the demonstration-filled but violence-free Okinawa Summit in 2000. Better ways to ensure a greater engagement with civil society and G8 governors collectively are necessary if the Summit system is to realize its true potential in the years ahead.

A more engaged civil society could be a real asset in the critical area of implementation and delivery. Its role here is especially important for a G8 institution that does not and should not have a secretariat of its own, but rely instead on the voluntary actions of its democratic national governments and societies. Effective implementation, in a politically guided fashion, could also benefit from further institutionalization of the G8 system, with ministerial-level forums for development and security being the obvious first steps. Beyond that, a G8 institution devoted to promoting open democracy and the rule of law should want its legislative and judicial branches to meet “at eight” as well.

Finally, in a world burdened by the heavy, “hard law” international organizations created in and for a long-gone, mid 20th-century world, the G8 will have to return to the issue, highlighted at Halifax 1995, of what new institutions of global governance are needed to meet the challenges of the 21st-century world. As it moves in its architecture, as well as its activities, from G8 to genuinely global governance, the G8 will need to design and deliver a new generation of coherent, complete international institutions for our ever-more-rapidly globalizing world.

This concludes our lecture, and our G8 Online course for 2002. I enjoyed having this opportunity to explore with you the challenges of globalization, global governance and the role of the G8. I wish you the best as your intellectual journey continues in the years to come. Do stay in touch, through our G8 Online Bulletin boards at [www.g8online.org](http://www.g8online.org) or our G8 Information Centre at [www.g8.utoronto.ca](http://www.g8.utoronto.ca).

Goodbye for now. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

## References

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## Discussion Questions

1. What did the G8 Summit perform more productively during its most recent fourth cycle than it did in earlier years? Why?
2. Has the success of Kananaskis really banished the “ghosts of Genoa” and thus given the G8 the momentum it needs in the years ahead? If so, how; if not, why?
3. Is Jacques Chirac likely to be as effective as Jean Chrétien in keeping the spirit and successes of Kananaskis alive? Why or why not?
4. Should future G8 Summits try to include more individual leaders of democratic countries, leaders from a broader array of global regions whether their countries are democracies or not, or leaders of international organizations? Why or why not?
5. When, why and under what conditions should India become a regular participant in the G8 Summit?
6. If the G8 did not exist, would the world invent it now? If so, in what form? If not, why?

## Quiz

1. The most recent European Summit was held in:
  - a. Kananaskis, Canada
  - b. St. Petersburg, Russia
  - c. Gotenburg, Sweden
  - d. Seville, Spain
2. The G7/G8 Summit that produced the most concrete commitments was:
  - a. Kananaskis, 2002
  - b. Okinawa, 2000
  - c. Rambouillet, 1975
  - d. Genoa, 2001
3. The host G8 leaders met with civil society representatives on site at the Summit at:
  - a. Denver, 1997
  - b. Halifax, 1995
  - c. Okinawa, 2000
  - d. Genoa, 2001
4. Reforming international institutions to meet the needs of the 21st century was the central theme of the G7/G8 Summit at:
  - a. Paris, 1989
  - b. Halifax, 1995
  - c. Genoa, 2001
  - d. Kananaskis, 2002