

4. THE POLITICAL AGENDA

With just over five weeks to go before the leaders of the world's major industrial democracies assemble in Toronto, the Canadian government, as host, remains determined to ensure that this will be a genuinely economic summit, and not one distracted and consumed by pressing, high profile political events. To realize this year-long ambition, Canada has recently added a session on economics at the beginning of the summit, expanded the amount of time that finance ministers will join their leaders at the summit table, and resisted all attempts to have the summit produce separate political declarations along with its major economic communique.

Despite this commitment and creativity, however, the Toronto summit will inevitably have a large, time-consuming, and potentially highly productive political agenda. For seldom in the history of the summit have so many of the world's central political problems been so ripe for resolution, and so tantalizingly close to a

negotiated settlement, at the time the leaders have met. The final list of items will not be known until the leaders' political directors meet two weeks before the summit to prepare a political agenda, and ultimately until the leader's themselves sit down to the opening dinner where political issues are traditionally discussed. But the list of likely political topics comprises superpower strategic arms control, Gorbachev's leadership, Poland, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf, the Middle East, Cambodia, Southern Africa, and even Central America. With peace, or expanded war now at hand in so many of these areas, the Toronto summitters have a unique opportunity to provide that final push of political will, and those last pieces of political support or punishment, to do the deals that ensure peace will prevail.

The summit's political discussions will, inevitably, centre around the particular world view of Ronald Reagan. This most patient and visionary president is now running out of political time. He will thus want to

use his last summit to make an unique contribution to world history - in the form a deal on deep cuts in strategic nuclear weapons. He will also want to solve the issues - Iran, Afghanistan, Poland, Central America - that President Carter couldn't, that weak Democratic leadership had caused, and that eight years of standing tall in the saddle of a Republican horse would. Moreover, when the Toronto summit opens, President Reagan will just have returned to North America from a long and intense set of meetings in Moscow with Gorbachev two weeks before. With early June spent on follow up business, on taking care of accumulated problems at the White House, and on resting up, the President will fly into Toronto with the politics of east-west relations, rather than the details of international economics, very much on his mind.

The summit's political discussions will thus almost certainly open with the subject of strategic arms control and what Reagan accomplished in Moscow. This issue is one with immediate and decisive implications for the independent strategic nuclear forces of Britain

and France, and the conventional deterrent provided largely by Germany. There will have been no time previously for Reagan to fully brief the major NATO allies, apart from Margaret Thatcher, in person, about the results of the Moscow summit. The Japanese will be anxious to learn what Reagan did on a subject of vital importance for their security. And all the summitters have all-too-vivid memories of how a President unconcerned with details was willing to gamble with history on this issue in the euphoria of a private meeting with a charming General-Secretary Gorbachev at Reykjavik. They will want to know the framework and the details of any far reaching deal that Reagan, in his last half year in office and inspired by his triumph on intermediate range nuclear arms control, may have made with Gorbachev this time round.

Strategic arms control is the centerpiece of a much larger and interconnected complex of east-west relations. This is a subject on which Thatcher and West German Chancellor Kohl have a deep interest and considerable first hand expertise. Indeed, it was they

rather than Reagan who dominated the discussion of east-west relations at the last few summits. They will want to trade with Reagan their judgments about whether Gorbachev will survive, whether he is succeeding, and what he will deliver, intentionally or not, in the modernization and democratization of the Soviet Union, and the shift of Soviet foreign policy from conflict to co-operation with the west. While they will applaud the Soviet decision to pull out of Afghanistan, they will want to discuss whether the Soviet-American agreement to facilitate this process will leave a stable government and country in the wake. Moreover recent events in Poland raise questions about how the spirit of Gorbachevism is penetrating West Germany's East European Communist neighbours, and whether the Soviets will ultimately be able to live with, or control, the results.

Beyond the core issues of east-west relations lies the middle east, with Afghanistan providing the unavoidable link. An uncontrolled Soviet pullout, an election-

dictated hands-off policy from America, and ensuing chaos in Kabul could make Afghanistan the second national home for Ayatollah Khomeini's brand of Islamic fundamentalism. This would give new momentum to an Iranian revolution recently sobered by military reverses on the western front, and threaten America's all-too-Islamic Pakistani ally next door. In the Persian Gulf itself, the experienced British in particular are concerned that a vengeful America's election-time eagerness to enter a naval and air war directly against Iran could unleash uncontrollable forces - from a new wave of terrorism in European cities, and attacks on hitherto safe European warships in the Gulf, to further pressure on Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Such an escalation, on top of the missile war between Iran and Iraq's capitals, and Iraq's use of chemical weapons, could kill any chances for the peace-through-stalemate that an exhausted Iran and Iraq might now be prepared to tolerate, and that last year's Venice summit so strongly endorsed.

The future of Iraq, Iran and their war has a direct bearing on the security of Israel, and thus the prospects for peace in the core of the middle east. At the summit the Americans will be anxious to consider with the equally engaged Europeans the prospects for the peace initiative that has consumed so much of Secretary of State George Shultz's time over the past few months. The continued violence and daily deaths generated by Palestinian unrest in Israel's occupied territories will demand discussion. And Israel's recent military incursion into Lebanon has reawakened historic memories and compounded nervousness among Israel's friends in the west about whether right-wing pressures in Israel will lead to actions counterproductive for all.

Beyond the middle east lie three other regions where issues of war and peace loom, and where the Toronto summiteers can make a difference. The Japanese, as the defenders of Asian interests at the summit and deep believers in the indivisible, global character of east-

west security, are anxious to talk about the Soviet-backed Vietnamese occupation of, and prospective pullout from, Kampuchea. President Reagan may well want to lecture his colleagues about the need to stand firm against the communist cancer in Central America. In return they, concerned that the once-promising Arias peace plan is now stalling, would want to use the summit to pressure Reagan to take a chance on peace.

For Canada, the dominant regional security issue will be southern Africa. Recent progress toward removing Cuban and South African troops from Mozambique, and Angola and thus securing independence for Namibia may warrant attention. But the key question will be the constitutionally-entrenched racism within South Africa itself. Brian Mulroney, as summit host, will once again ensure that this topic he cares about passionately will be injected into the discussions of an otherwise preoccupied summit. But unlike the Venice summit last year, he will have some support. Speaking in the Council Chambers of Toronto's City hall last month,

United States Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead made it clear that Ronald Reagan has finally lost all patience with the South African regime. The Americans now seem prepared to use the summit communique to send a strong message to Pretoria about the need to change its ways. With Japan and Germany now moving in the same direction, and South Africa itself showing signs, however faint, of responding to outside pressure, Margaret Thatcher will no longer be able to prevent the summit from making a substantial contribution in this area.