

## 6. PERSONALITIES AND FRIENDSHIPS

Despite the careful bureaucratic preparations, the clash of entrenched national positions, the competing ideologies and the complex diplomatic calculations, the Toronto summit will ultimately be an exercise in personal dialogue, conflict and co-operation among eight individual leaders. As senior politicians, these individuals make policy by dealing with people, rather than paper. As the leader's of the world's major industrial democracies, they share the loneliness of being at the top of countries often difficult to govern. They also share the strong ego's necessary to have reached, and remained on, that lofty perch. And in the private sessions of the summit, assisted only by ministers they have appointed, and a personal representative they have selected, their personalities will have an unusually free reign in determining whether success or failure results.

At past summits, the mix of personalities has done much to shape the outcome. The professionally-inspired but

personally-reinforced friendship between West German

Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and French President Valery Giscard D'Estaing was essential in creating the summit in the first place, nurturing the forum through infancy, and generating its notable successes of the 1970's. The bonds of intellectual toughmindedness between Germany's Schmidt and Canada's Pierre Trudeau - probably the two most successful seven-power summiteers ever - did much to reduce differences in relative national capability, and allow these otherwise secondary states to get their way. And these legendary summit love affairs have been accompanied by memorable antagonisms - most notably between Schmidt and U. S. President Jimmy Carter - that permeated the atmosphere and made progress more difficult.

At the Toronto summit, personal friendships will matter even more. A strong effort has been made to recapture the legendary informality of the original summits and to give the leaders themselves maximum control over the agenda, the discussions and the resulting communique. Procedural innovations, such as the mini-retreat at the

University of Toronto, further this goal.

The Toronto summit also features veteran leaders with well known foibles and friends. This will be the eighth seven-power summit together for Prime Minister Thatcher, President Reagan and President Mitterrand of France, while Brian Mulroney, West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and Noboru Takeshita of Japan (as finance minister and now prime minister) will have joined them for four.

It will thus feature all of the intense likes and dislikes that flourish at any annual family re-union, charged by the additional emotion of a gathering that bids farewell to the well-loved grandfather of the group.

During the 1980's it has very much been Ronald Reagan's personal friendships that have defined the summit's sociogram, and the dynamics of its dialogue. His list of favorite world leaders - those who he likes as well as admires- begins with an inner triumvirate of seven-power summiteers - Thatcher, Mulroney, and former

Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone. In Reagan's view these leaders have the right stuff - an attachment to Californian-like conservative principles, the vision and boldness required to take leaps of faith into the future, and the political skill required to pull them off.

With Thatcher the bond is one of ideology, a common decisiveness, and loyalty - epitomized in her decision, much criticized at home, to allow U. S. aircraft to use British bases in their bombing raids on Libya. With Mulroney, the bond is one of personal rapport and style. The two men share the easy informality, the congenial overstatement, the instinctive openness, and the sense of North Americaness that makes them genuinely comfortable in each other's presence.

Across the Atlantic, there is another continental love-in that matters at the summit - that between Mitterrand and Kohl. This unlikely pairing - between a Frenchman and a German, a socialist and a conservative, and a

father figure and a compromiser - has roots that are quintessentially personal. Both are parish politicians rather than the pair of technocrats they replaced. Both prefer each other to the leaders which proceeded them in the other country. And both are driven to live up to, or surpass, the historic Franco-German friendships between Giscard D'Estaing and Schmidt, and De Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer before. Thus, it is not surprising to see the two holding hands in public - before a monument to their war dead.

One attitude the two leaders do not share is their view of the third leader of the new Europe, Margaret Thatcher. Mitterrand admires her, as a strong, tough survivor and leader, and as another freshly-elected politician with whom he will have to do business for quite some time. His respect has been honed by the great duels he has had with this formidable political animal over the showdown issues such as agricultural subsidies at European Community summits in the past.

In contrast, Kohl's relationship with Thatcher is cool and reserved, surprisingly so for two leaders who ostensibly share a conservative vision. One cause may be Thatcher's acerbic criticism of such major German foreign policy initiatives as their decision on short range missile modernization and franco-German defence co-operation. But the real reason may be Thatcher's barely-concealed admiration for Kohl's predecessor, Helmut Schmidt, and her judgement that Kohl fares poorly in comparison.

One thing which Kohl and Mitterrand can agree on is, paradoxically, Ronald Reagan. Despite the great ideological disputes of the summits of the early 1980's, with Reagan and Mitterrand in opposite corners, Mitterrand has never made fun of Reagan in the way that Pierre Trudeau may have been tempted to do. With Kohl, respect has been turned into a fierce loyalty to a President who withstood fierce criticism at home, and stood behind him abroad, in the symbolically and historically vital visit to the Bitburg cemetery at the

time of the German-hosted, Bonn summit of 1985.

The two enigma's of the Toronto summit - for the other leader's as well as the public - are Japan's Takeshita and Italy's De Mita. Takeshita's round of bilateral summitry with the other seven-power leaders during the past five months ignited no infatuations or sparks, except in Bonn. Here Kohl and Takeshita -two understated and underrated masters of political coalitions governing economic powerhouses - got on very well on a personal level. In contrast, Italy's De Mita has yet to forge the close bond with his fellow Christian Democrat Helmut Kohl that his predecessor, Prime Minister Craxi, had with his fellow socialist, Francois Mitterrand.

As the summit host, and the man who will ultimately broker the compromises needed for summit success, Brian Mulroney will need to call on all the personal friendships he can command. President Reagan will be his ultimate defender and deterrent, and bring all the

support that a lame duck president can. In addition to their deep friendship, the President knows he has to give Mulroney a successful summit to help ensure the re-election of his North American soulmate, and thus the endurance of the Reagan revolution, and its bilateral trade deal, after January 1989.

Mulroney can also call upon the sole fellow francophone at the summit, Francois Mitterrand, who he has met frequently and knows well. The response he receives will be tempered less by past successes in creating the francophone summit, or transitory current concerns over fish and submarines, than by Mitterrand's evaluation of Mulroney's character as a leader, and estimation of the likelihood of Mulroney's survival after 1988.

Beyond these two, there is little to invoke. After four years in office, Mulroney has failed to develop a serious bilateral relationship with Kohl, and has been slow to get to know Takeshita and De Mita on a personal level. The one leader he knows all too well is Thatcher



- but she will be a source of cold resistance, backed by some resentment, from battles over South Africa at previous seven-power and Commonwealth summits. It will thus take all of the Prime Minister's known skills as a labour mediator, good listener, and private charmer, to forge consensus from the battle-scared veterans of summits past, returning to Toronto for one more round.