

The United States and Summit Reform in a Transformational Era

Colin Bradford is a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington and at the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) in Waterloo, Canada, and is director of the Brookings-CIGI global governance reform project at Brookings. He is co-editor with Johannes Linn of Global Governance Reform: Breaking the Stalemate, published by the Brookings Institution Press in 2007.

Introduction:

The United States is at a critical turning point. The 2008 presidential contest and election represents a potential watershed in American politics and foreign policy. This chapter begins by exploring some of the elements both defining the watershed and potential principles and practices for managing the transition to a new era in global politics. Summit reform is examined within the context of this transition to see what place it has for the United States in the mix of broader approaches to a new era and what potential it has for the U.S. as an instrument for transition. To better grasp the importance of summit reform in prospective U.S. approaches to reshaping its role in the world, a questionnaire was undertaken specifically for this book to determine what U.S. experts and officials think about summit reform in comparison to their counterparts from 15 other major countries. The results of this survey provide insights into the outlook for the Heiligendamm process of outreach to non-G8 countries and into the degree of convergence of views within the international community on summit reform. The survey also reveals the specific points of divergence between the views of leading Americans and their peers from other G8 countries as well as those from emerging market countries that are potential new members of an expanded summit grouping. These results provide the basis for reflections on prospective pathways forward for summit reform, in both its country composition and mandate, as we look ahead to 2009 and beyond.

I. The U.S. as a Security Threat to Itself in a Polarizing World

The United States is undergoing a transformational shift in the foundations and nature of its foreign policy.

The world is increasingly splintered, fractured and even polarized. Forty percent of the world is living on \$2 a day or less while the world's wealthiest people have accelerating incomes and assets. Growing inequality blemishes the spread of globalization. Backlashes against globalization fuel anger, violence and terrorism generating a cultural divide between extremists and fundamentalists on one side and industrial country societies on the other. As citizens of the West stereotype Muslims as terrorists, Akbar Ahmed has found that "Western misconceptions of Islam (are) the number one threat facing the Muslim world" today. The United States has become what Joseph Joffe calls the "uberpower", the highest power in military, technological, economic and cultural terms.

As a result, the U.S. is now “the other” for much of the world and is resented, resisted and reproached by those confronting American power. *The overarching threat to the United States is now the U.S. itself and how it is perceived in the world. Hyperpower generates new vulnerabilities for American security.* How the U.S. is seen in the non-Western world generates dissent, disturbance, violence and terrorism which feedback as security threats to the U.S. itself.

This is not just an issue of a decline in the image of the U.S., as found in the Pew Global Attitudes Project (WPost 6:28:07), but a more profound shift. A survey by Harris Research for the Financial Times reported that “32 per cent of respondents in five European countries (France, Germany, Italy, the UK and Spain) regard the US as a bigger threat than any other state”. (FT 7:02:07) In addition, “35 per cent of American 16-24 year-olds identify (the US) as the chief danger to stability”. The view of others outside the North Atlantic of the United States is sufficiently distrustful as to undermine confidence in the U.S. among Europeans and young Americans themselves. This is an historically new situation for the US to be in, with major implications for its role in the world.

The *challenge* facing the United State is how to meet global challenges facing the rest of the world by contributing ideas, institutional innovations, policies and resources toward improving the human condition. As a South African colleague pointed out, the U.S. has always been respected in the world when it has contributed to the world beyond its immediate self-interest. In the end, such actions rebounded back to America’s benefit.

The *question* facing the United States is how to hold this world together in a singular global community engaged in common enterprises and keep the world from falling apart into “us versus them” politics, regional blocs, and civilizational divides.

Sustaining a global approach to global issues is threatened by those such as Chavez and Almadinejad who would drive the world into oppositional corners, by the uncertainty regarding the objectives of Russia in energy and China in military matters, and by the cultural divisions embodied in the “clash of civilization” mentality brought to the world by the growth of terrorism. But it is also threatened by U.S. behavior which has relied too heavily on hard power, competition, narrow alliances, driving self-interest, and over-assertiveness. The transition to a new global order needs to be based on a new set of values of respect and reciprocity, common interests and compromise, and cooperation and coordination.

Based on these values, the United States needs to blend realism and idealism, good intentions with shrewdness, and pragmatism with vision to keep the world working together rather than breaking apart and to transform its role from one of dominance to one of trusted global leader in the process.

II. Pluralism and Linking Domestic Concerns to International Engagement

Two principles could help guide the U.S. through the foundational shifts currently underway yet unresolved. America is both melting pot and the embodiment of pluralism. A country of immigrants has become a nation. But individual communities retain their identity. Muslim-

Americans are increasingly prominent in local and state governments as elected officials but Muslim-Americans also have a strong sense of cultural identity and community within themselves. Multiple identities and roles are part of 21st century life. Being a member of the global community can be based on a similar fusion of belonging to an overarching global society and to a nation with state interests and identities to advance. Pluralism and unity have been foundational ideas for America since the beginning. Simplifying ideologies that overwhelm “difference” and distinctiveness contribute to the polarization of world opinion and the alienation of “others” from the West. Embracing difference, engaging others and incorporating distinctive perspectives into brokered approaches to common problems is not only consistent with the *e pluribus unum* foundation of America but provides a fresh, new approach for U.S. foreign policy today.

Second, during the 20th century there was a division between U.S. foreign policy and U.S. domestic policy. American foreign policy was driven by an elite with internationalist experience and outlook but the internal links and resonance were weak. The 21st century is characterized by globalization which means the inter-penetration of domestic domains into each other, breaking down the boundaries between states and between internal and external affairs. U.S. foreign policy now needs to synergize with domestic concerns, issues and interests.

These principles of unity derived from pluralism and the fusion of internal and external issues can be translated into practices which can help America in transforming the world by transforming its behavior in the world. Instead of asserting American hegemony based on a liberal ideology of democracy and markets, the United States can embrace the pluralism of economic and political models as an organizing motif for global integration. China, Japan, Germany and the U.K. each have different forms of capitalism. A good example is China. China’s economic model is more directed but market forces are effervescent and irresistible now. China has been more successful in reducing extreme poverty than any other nation in the world over the last twenty years. This experience needs to be brought to the global table as an example of forging capitalism with a human face, not to be replicated by others (no one else has 1.2 billion people) but to be studied and selectively drawn from for applications elsewhere. China’s experience is an indispensable asset in a global approach to poverty reduction in a world in which 40 percent of the world’s poor are in middle income countries, even though China is not a shining example of Anglo-American market capitalism.

China’s economy and economic experience needs to be fully integrated into the global economy and global institutions not marginalized from them. The World Bank and the IMF need China to be invested in their missions and a leader with a stake in their success, not a passive participant in institutions they regard as Western or trans-Atlantic. As China becomes more integrated in the global economy, China will stimulate more internal consumption- driven growth to balance its export growth and the contentious exchange rate issues between the U.S. and China will attenuate. In fact, a shift by the U.S. toward emphasizing internal demand expansion over advocating market-driven exchange rate determination would demonstrate a new pluralism and pragmatism in economic ideas and ease tensions now in the debate on “global imbalances”.

A similar shift in America's internal-external dynamic would be facilitated by the U.S. beginning to deal with *health and poverty, energy and environment, and jobs and growth* as seamless domestic and international issues. Forty million Americans without health insurance is a poverty issue in America. Global health threats loom as one of the highest priorities on the international security agenda, vitally linked to the global poverty challenge. Achieving energy independence for America is a myth, and is unnecessary if the world is treated and managed as a global energy system. Solving U.S. energy security needs requires a global approach, not an exclusively national autonomy idea. America's angst over losing domestic jobs abroad is directly linked to fears of globalization blinding Americans from seeing the gains from trade. Finding the right balance between trade and jobs, between internationalism and nationalism, faces all nations in a new way now, exemplifying the fusion of domestic and foreign policy concerns everywhere, including in the U.S.. Free trade and protectionism are too often presented as dichotomous choices in U.S. foreign policy. In fact, trade regimes constitute a wide spectrum along which countries, including the United States, can position themselves in a differentiated fashion. A shift toward greater pluralism and pragmatism in U.S. trade policy would resonate internally and make more sense externally to countries with widely different views on trade.

So rather than returning to 19th century foreign policy principles of balance of power or to 20th century ideas of American hegemony, America needs to move on to new foundations for the future based on the linkage of pluralism and belonging and the fusion of domestic and foreign policy interests. Diversity is a higher value than "shared values", economic multipolarity is a greater source of security than balance of power, and cooperation based on shared interests is a better foundation for global order than competition based on ideological commitments to democracy and markets.

"Diversity is the engine of the evolution of living things, including living civilizations." - Chinua Achebe

III. From Principles to Practice: Four Shifts in the US Approach

What specifically could be done to translate these principles to practice?

First, there is a need to *address major global issues* in a cooperative framework of mutual responsibility. Urgent global challenges will drive new behaviors more than new forms. Form should follow function, not the other way around. Reinvigorating a major global effort to reduce extreme poverty along with improving global health and initiating a new effort to guide the future of global energy supplies consistent with constraining carbon emissions provide two major sets of global challenges which can forge new cooperative behaviors, institutions and results.

The Monterrey Plus Five summit in Doha in December 2008 requires a major push to accelerate progress if the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are to be achieved by 2015. The MDGs embody a commitment by 185 nations to an agenda which integrates poverty, health, gender equality, education, environment and cooperation into a multisectoral agenda to galvanize greater

public support for the seamless domestic-international interface of these issues. But leaders must lead their publics and parliaments at Doha in December and beyond to mobilize resources and policies to reach the MDGs as the major global effort for reducing global poverty. An expanded summit group would be an appropriate instrument to steward the MDG agenda to 2015.

The global energy market exists but there is no focal point for it. OPEC represents the oil producers and the International Energy Agency (IEA) at the OECD is seen as the “consuming countries’ watchdog”. The private sector and many ambitious states like the fact that there is no global guidance group for energy even though it is now clear that the spill-over effects of investment decisions, technological innovations and supply disruptions affect everyone’s vital interests. There are major opportunities for cooperation and coordination to meet the burgeoning energy demands over the next 50 years as 3 billion more people inhabit the planet.

Second, there is a need to *embed the new powers* into full membership in the global system and the global steering group. Responsibility is a function of role, not just attitude. Bringing major emerging market economies into fuller membership, greater leadership roles and larger voting shares in the global institutional architecture gives them a stake in the system because they see it as *their* system as well, not just the West’s. The G8 summit mechanism is obsolete, a 20th century aberration parading in the 21st century as a global steering committee for a world in which G8 countries are a distinct minority in people, in culture, in religion, and in economic size. The 2007 G8 summit in Heiligendamm, Germany, repeated the gestures of recent summits of by inviting the heads of state of China, India, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico (“the outreach five”) to a session on energy and climate change *after* the G8 had completed its own discussion, decisions and communiqué on the issue. This is an outrageous practice. The G8 Plus Five is not the same as a G13/L13. Until the G8 is transformed into a G13 or some larger, more inclusive grouping there will be no global steering committee with real legitimacy, and no one can expect the new powers to feel fully engaged in the international system. The West is not the Rest. As long as the G8 pretentiously purports to decide for the globe, the “us versus them” divide prevails over a valid global governance mechanism.

Third, there is a need to *remove ideology* as the centerpiece of American involvement in the international arena. Democracy and the market economy are not the compelling ideals in the rest of the world that Americans think they are. Realism requires us to understand that autocracy and authoritarian behaviors are elements of governing in some regions, even as pluralism grows. Holding progress on other issues hostage to forcing democratic ideals and market fundamentalism on countries with different practices is blocking progress rather than facilitating it. Human rights, representativeness and encouraging economic openness, initiative and innovation are important drivers for social change. Confidence that people the world over want the fruits of greater freedom and opportunity is not an invitation to prescribe the medicine they should take to get there. The new idea of a Concert or League of Democracies would further divide the world rather than unite it. Some important countries that are vital to global progress will not join. Demonstrating openness to diversity of political and economic models will facilitate policy dialogue and international engagement conducive to the development of greater democratic practice and market competition not deter it. Encouraging China, India and Russia to more fully participate in activities (including

the IEA) of the OECD, known as the club of industrial democracies, without insisting on full membership is an example of a highly effective way of sharing best practice, engaging in harmonizing policies, coordinating behaviors affecting each other and integrating these critical countries into the global system without proselytizing them.

Fourth, *withdrawal of U.S. prerogatives* in international affairs to enhance the participation of other countries in global leadership is to motivate engagement and responsibility rather than constituting retreat, withdrawal or loss of power. Soft power is more effective as a tool for engagement and cooperation than hard power which is a better tool for competition and confrontation. As an example, if the U.S. and Europe could agree together to abandon their prerogative to appoint the president of the World Bank and the head of the IMF, respectively, this would be evidence of trust in the capacity of leaders from other regions and countries to lead these institutions in the global interest. The Wolfowitz crisis at the World Bank highlighted the bankruptcy of the practice of having the president of the World Bank be a political appointee of the U.S. president, much like a member of the U.S. cabinet. If Paul Wolfowitz himself had been selected in an open competition of nominees from around the world and voted on by the entire board of executive directors as the merit-based candidate, even he would have felt that he was there in behalf of the international community not as a representative of the United States. A withdrawal of this prerogative by the United States in a “grand bargain” with the Europeans wherein they withdraw their prerogative to name the head of the IMF would constitute a major step toward multilateralizing the governance of these important institutions, increasing their effectiveness and enhancing the spirit of cooperation within them. This is just one example where transformation in current practice could transform behaviors.

This brief overview of four practical actions that could constitute a new approach by the United States to defining its role in the world and in a new global order reveals that summit reform is a critical element of a larger strategy. Summit reform by itself is not a powerful enough step to have the transformative effect required to reshape the global order and the U.S. role in it. Rather these systemic impacts require a broader approach within which summit reform could play a key role. But also the degree to which summit reform can be transformative depends on whether a compositional shift toward greater inclusion of new powers is accompanied by a new mission for summits. In addition, the degree to which U.S. support for summit reform in a new administration is an effective transformative tool for U.S. foreign policy depends upon whether it is seen by leading figures in other countries as an important step. These are all questions raised and elucidated by the survey.

IV. Prospective Views on Summit Reform in the United States: Survey Results

In thinking about how to write a chapter on US views on the G8 enlargement process within and beyond the Heiligendamm Process, it seemed less than enlightening to consult with the current administration on their attitudes toward summit reform since the election will be over by the time this book is published. Furthermore, what seemed important to ascertain is the degree to which there is consensus or discord in the international community on the issue of summit reform. Each country has its own calculations to make. Most of the current members of the G8 are extremely reluctant to support a formulation of an expanded summit that might diminish their stature and dilute their

influence in this exclusive club. The four European countries in particular are reluctant to reduce their four seats to one. The “outreach 5” members seem like the most likely candidates for possible entry into an expanded G8 or into a new summit grouping. But, none of them, not even China, want to be “cherry picked” to enter alone, or even as one of two new entrants, for a variety of reasons. Both of these facts of life in the politics of summit reform make Senator John McCain’s proposals to remove Russia and add Brazil and India infeasible.

The variety of interests and perspectives that come to play on summit reform are enormous and complex. Hence, an unbroken progression from G8 to a G13, where the “outreach 5” are asked to join as full members, as logical as it may seem since the Five have been present at all the summits since Gleneagles in 2005, is not an inexorable next step. As a consequence of these complexities, it is not at all certain *ex ante* that there would be a convergence of opinion much less a consensus view on summit reform among senior officials from major industrial and emerging market countries and experts knowledgeable about international reform. Indeed, it might well have been the case that what a survey of opinion among these two groups of involved participants in the international debate on reform might well have revealed is precisely the great diversity of opinion in the international community, which itself would complicate the reform process.

A “Heiligendamm Process Questionnaire” consisting of more than fifteen questions was sent to more than 150 officials and experts from G20 countries. The questions covered five main topics: (i) the role of the G8; (ii) the recent evolution of the G8 into a G8 plus 5; (iii) beyond the G8 plus 5; (iv) summit mandate and mission; and (v) the United States in a polarized world. Seventy six people responded, 30 of whom are officials and 46 of whom are from think tanks, academic institutions or research centers. Twenty six (26) Americans responded and 50 officials and experts from 15 other countries. Quite unexpectedly, the results are extremely clear. On most important questions, the results are extremely robust, in that the responses are by and large well over 65 percent or less than 25 percent, which means that even if there were a substantial margin of error, there is still a clear set of outcomes. The questions included in this questionnaire and the statistical results appear in the Appendix to this paper. What follows here is a discussion of the main results in a policy context.

(i) The Role of the G8

The positive news is that the G8 is widely viewed by both US respondents and those from other major countries as serving a useful role as the pivotal club for its members and perceived to be actually performing that role. But, there is a widespread view (over 90% of both groups) that the G8 is not viewed by world public opinion as either effective as a mechanism for international cooperation nor as legitimate in its country composition.

Furthermore, 94 percent of those from other major countries and 80 percent of Americans think that the world needs a **global steering mechanism**. (Later a global steering mechanism is defined as “taking on the broad, evolving agenda of global challenges and provide strategic guidance to the international institutions on how to address them”.) But, despite this, between 83 and 87 percent of both groups think the G8 is *not* actually performing that role. As a consequence, it seems that part of

the perception of the lack of effectiveness and legitimacy of the G8 is determined by its over-reach in trying to be something it isn't: a global steering mechanism instead a pivotal club of like-minded Western countries. The sense of crisis in the functioning of the G8 is not only derived from the "unrepresentativeness" of the G8 membership undermining its legitimacy but also due to the fact that it is unable to do what more than 90 percent of officials and experts from other major countries think the world needs, namely to perform the functions of a global steering mechanism, in part because the countries that need to be part of addressing global challenges are not there. Hence, the effectiveness and representativeness deficits of the G8 interact with each other to drive the drama of the G8 into a legitimacy crisis.

Therefore, the *conclusion* seems to be that the G8 is in crisis in terms of its larger global public role in representativeness, effectiveness and legitimacy of its country composition but that it should be maintained by its members as a pivotal club. *In light of these results, G8 enlargement seems to be a less promising path forward than the alternative of creating a new summit group for dealing with global issues and providing a "global steering mechanism".* This has to be considered a significant conclusion, since most of the international debate on summit reform has been about G8 enlargement.

(ii) "Recent Evolution" of the G8 into a G8 Plus 5

Since the G8 summit in Gleneagles in 2005, the G8 summits have regularly included the "outreach 5" in part of the summit meeting. At the Heiligendamm summit in 2007, Angela Merkel in particular pushed for a secretariat to be established at the OECD in Paris to support work on four key issues by the G8 Plus 5 to prepare the issues for possible discussion at G8 Plus 5 heads of state/government level. This "Heiligendamm Process" will come to a head with a report on the progress of this process at the G8 summit hosted in Italy in 2009.

This section of the survey asked questions regarding views of these officials and experts on this "recent evolution" of the G8. Between 91% and 100% of respondents from the U.S. and 95-97% of those from other major countries see "the recent evolution of the G8" as IMPORTANT, POSITIVE and NECESSARY. Seventy one percent (71%) of those from other major countries, while only 52% of U.S. respondents would "favor the permanent transformation of the G8 summit group into an L13 where all thirteen countries would be full members of the group". And yet, only 23-24% of both groups think that "the recent evolution of the G8" into a G8 Plus 5 is ADEQUATE.

Finally and importantly, seventy nine percent (79%) of U.S. respondents (USR) and 85% of those from the other major countries "favor other changes in the leader-level summit, beyond the thirteen". This is an unequivocal conclusion with importance for the future.

(iii) .Beyond the G8 Plus 5

Despite this clear result in favor of changes beyond the thirteen, there is less clarity and consensus about what paths forward are most promising in terms of the specifics of the country composition of an expanded summit grouping. Forty two (42%) of U.S. respondents favor "adding a permanent seat

for an Islamic country to the L13” and 42% of US respondents also favor “adding rotating seats (to the L13) to represent smaller, poorer countries.” Curiously, only 30% and 18% of the respondents from other major countries favored these two options, respectively. The other results are:

Thirty eight percent (38%) of those from other major countries (OMCs) favor “converting the G8 into an L20” whereas only 26% of USR favor doing so.

Thirty two percent (32%) of USR and 30% of those from OMCs favored “variable geometry“, adding seats to the L13 depending on the issue under discussion.

Thirty percent (30%) of respondents from OMCs favor “limiting the size of the new leaders-level summit group to 16”, whereas only 16% of USR favor doing so.

There is not much support for adding an Arab Middle Eastern country to the L13 (11% USR; 22% OMCs), nor for adding a permanent seat for Nigeria (15% USR; 20% OMCs), nor for adding other countries (5% USR; 13% OMCs).

Whereas 72% of USR but only 50% of OMCs “think the EU members should consolidate their seats into one seat in the G8 summits”, 4% of USR and none (0%) of OMCs “think that EU governments are likely to agree to this option in the near future, say by 2010”.

In summary, these results indicate some support for varied options of expansion beyond the thirteen such as variable geometry, adding an Islamic country, and rotating seats for smaller, poorer countries. The stronger U.S. support for these options relative to OMC is consistent with the relatively weaker support (USR 52% vs. 71% OMC) by Americans in favoring “the permanent transformation of the G8 into an L13 “.

(iv) Summit Mandate and Mission

In answering whether they would “favor a stronger mandate and clearer mission for an expanded summit group”, 78% of USR and 81% of respondents from OMCs prioritized “taking on the broad, evolving agenda of global challenges and provide strategic guidance to the international institutions on how to address them” and 43% of USR and 67% of those from OMCs selected “push for international institutional reform in the IMF, World Bank, UN and other international institutions”. Forty three percent (43%) of USR and 33% of those from OMCs indicated “returning to the original emphasis on international economic coordination issues”. What is interesting here is the degree to which these three priorities relate to each other, given that there was a choice among six options.

None (0%) of USR and only 4% of respondents from OMCs that an expanded summit group should “limit the focus to geopolitical military security issues”, 9% of USR and 6% of OMC favor a single issue focus, and 9% of USR and 27% of those from OMCs favor dealing primarily with current crises. There is great clarity in these responses regarding what an expanded summit grouping should not focus on.

In *summary*, there is great clarity (roughly 80 percent of both groups) about the primary summit mandate that there is a need to take on “the broad, evolving agenda of global challenges and provide strategic guidance to the international institutions on how to address them”. This conclusion seems consistent with the overwhelming support by both groups (80% USR and 94% OMC) for the view that “the world needs a global steering mechanism” and, for the purposes of this analysis, defines that term.

(v) *The United States in a Polarized World*

Sixty seven percent (67%) of US respondents and 85% of those from OMCs “favor the next president of the United States announcing her-his support for the 2009 summit in Italy to be convened in an expanded group of permanent members”.

On average, respondents from both the US and the OMCs viewed reformed and expanded summits as IMPORTANT to the United States as “a vehicle for engaging the rest of the world” and as IMPORTANT “as a high profile political step toward changing the perception of the US in the world”.

On average, those from OMCs viewed reformed and expanded summits as POSSIBLY HELPFUL “in addressing global challenges” whereas the US respondents viewed them as IMPORTANT in doing so.

These average responses mask the fact that the distribution of responses on all three of these questions regarding the US role and response were highly skewed toward “possibly helpful” and above with virtually none of the responses indicating these issues were UNIMPORTANT so that the VERY UNIMPORTANT responses pulled the average toward the mean (3.5 = IMPORTANT) when in fact the distribution was more toward the upper end.

In summary, it is clear from these results that summit reform is perceived by both US respondents and those from other major countries as a significant instrument for engaging the rest of the world, as an effective political step for American foreign policy in “changing the perception of the US in the world” and as a way of “addressing global challenges”. It is interesting to note the extremely high support (67% USR; 85% OMCs) that “favor the next president of the United States announcing her-his support for the 2009 summit in Italy to be convened in an expanded group of permanent members”. These results indicate that support for summit reform is viewed as important to the United States both by Americans and even more strongly by respondents from other major countries.

V. Implications for the Future

The first thing to note about these results in terms of their usefulness in discerning pathways forward for summit reform is that they are clear. Indeed, one could argue that they are surprisingly clear. One would have thought there might have been greater diversity of views among the *conoscenti* in

the international community who are not only knowledgeable but actively involved in these issues. Indeed, on the fundamental issues there is a consensus on major conclusions. That does not necessarily mean that the actual pathway forward will follow from the consensus on the conclusions in the survey, but it does mean that there is broad agreement that some reform is necessary and that there is a focused range of options that define the likely direction of change.

The second aspect of consequence for interpreting the significance of the results for the reform process itself is the degree to which the different dimensions of the results are not only inter-related but also mutually reinforcing. The survey results on the G8 that perceive it to be primarily a “pivotal club” of likeminded nations rather than a global steering mechanism helps illuminate the choice between G8 enlargement on the one hand and the creation of a new summit grouping on the other. The fact is that both options are open, and it is hard to predict which of the two pathways might be taken in practice. There is indeed momentum toward G8 enlargement as the Heiligendamm Process makes manifest. There is also a strong push for a new expanded summit grouping beyond 13 which is consistent with 80 percent support for prioritizing a global steering mechanism role for it and 80 / 94 percent of respondents who think “the world needs a global steering mechanism”. But if a new expanded summit were created and the G8 is retained, then one would anticipate that a separate G5 would also be brought into being, adding another new element to the politics of summitry.

But the fact that around 65 percent of all 76 respondents “view the G8 as a pivotal club” and roughly 60 per cent “think the G8 is performing the role of pivotal club” means that the G8 has a viable and valued role for its members that might well continue in the future, even as, or perhaps especially as a new, expanded summit grouping is formed to deal with global issues beyond the purview of the relatively narrow membership of the G8. The fact that 80 percent of U.S. respondents and 94 percent of respondents from other major countries think “the world needs a global steering mechanism”, while only about 15 percent of all respondents think the G8 is actually performing that role, highlights the degree of over-reach by the G8 which is undermining its legitimacy.

These results mesh with the fact that 80 percent of all respondents favored the global steering mechanism role (“taking on the broad, evolving agenda of global challenges and provide strategic guidance to the international institutions on how to address them”) in defining a stronger and clearer mandate for an expanded summit grouping. The fact that the second priority among respondents on the question of summit mandate and mission was to “push for international institutional reform in the IMF, World Bank, UN and other international institutions” (43% USR vs. 67% OMCs) and that the third priority was “returning to the original emphasis (of summits) on international economic coordination issues” indicates consistency in the responses among issues.

Form follows function. The compositional shift in the membership of the summit grouping is not just a free-standing political issue. It is intimately linked to the roles and functions, the mandate and mission of summits to address global issues and align the international institutions to deal with them. This is a powerful result which makes clear that summit reform, in *both* form and function, is required to enhance both representativeness and effectiveness together, as a means of increasing the legitimacy of summits and the international institutions at the same time. Since these are each major

components of the international system, these results would appear to define inter-related steps toward improving the capacity of the international system as a whole to deal with global challenges as the top priorities in redefining the mandate of summits.

A third aspect of consequence for the future is the strong response of those from the other major countries to questions regarding the degree to which THEY view United States support for summit reform as important to the United States “as a vehicle for engaging the rest of the world” and “as a high profile political step toward changing the perception of the US in the world”. If this were not the case, and there was less support for summit reform among Americans (which there is in some of these results) , then there would be no foreign policy political rationale for the United States to support summit reform because U.S. support would not have a positive impact on leaders in other major countries. But this is decidedly not the case. On average, American respondents and respondents from other countries all felt that U.S. support for reformed and expanded summits would be “important” as a vehicle for engaging the rest of the world and as a high profile political step toward changing the perception of the US in the world. More than that, 85 percent of respondents from the rest of the world “favor the next president of the United States announcing her-his support for the 2009 summit in Italy to be convened in an expanded group of permanent members”, while 67 percent of U.S. respondents favored this option.

Clearly, beyond its own perceptions of the summit reform issue, *the United States can reap foreign policy benefits by becoming an active supporter and leader of summit reform because leading figures in other major countries overwhelmingly think that this would directly benefit the United States at this moment in history.* If this were not the case, whatever the views of the U.S. policy makers on the merits of the summit reform issue itself, there would not be the added incentive to support it based on the direct foreign policy political benefits of doing so which these survey results clearly reveal. Going beyond the survey results themselves but consistent with them, it seems that U.S. support for summit reform and expansion would be received by the rest of the world as a gesture toward a more engaged, collaborative, cooperative, multilateral approach to global politics in contrast to what might be construed to have been the unilateralist, confrontational, narrow national interest approach of the recent past. It would be a way of signaling a fundamental shift in the U.S. conduct of its role in the world and of subduing the tendency to create antagonisms which have put the U.S. in a position of generating security threats to itself rather than ameliorating them. The fact that on almost all of the major strategic questions, the U.S. responses are two thirds and higher and that in general there is a greater similarity than difference between USR and OMC responses, suggest that U.S. exceptionalism is not so evident in the US group of respondents. As Andrew Cooper observed, this might “allow the return to responsible multilaterally oriented (U.S.) leadership to be accomplished in a far easier manner than might be anticipated”.

Finally, the other major finding is that despite the fact that between 90 and 100 percent of the both groups viewed the “recent evolution of the G8” as important, positive, and necessary, less than 25 per cent of both groups found the recent evolution into a G8 Plus 5 to be “inadequate”. Nearly 80 percent of U.S. respondents and 85 percent of respondents from other major countries “favor other changes in the leader-level summit, beyond the thirteen”. This, too, is a major result with

consequences for the pathways forward because it implies that the evolution of the G8 Plus 5 into a G13 is not inexorable or inevitable but rather that some additional countries should be added “beyond the thirteen”, in the view of an overwhelming majority of the 76 officials and experts polled in this survey. Despite the strong and consistent a pattern of meeting at G8 Plus 5 from Gleneagles in 2005, to St. Petersburg in 2006 to Heiligendamm in 2007, and despite a reporting requirement on the Heiligendamm Process scheduled for the summit to take place in Italy in 2009, there may well be additions to the G8 Plus 5 grouping, based on the opinions in this survey, when and if summit reform eventually occurs. *Whichever happens, G8 enlargement or the formation of a new summit grouping, the fact is that there is a push by the officials and experts in this survey toward an expanded summit grouping larger than thirteen.*

VI. Pathways Forward for Summit Reform

These implications of the survey results lead directly into a consideration of alternative pathways toward summit reform or alternative future scenarios of how summit reform may or may not evolve. The most likely alternatives would seem to be (A) validation of the **G8 Plus 5 process** at the Italian summit in 2009 and acceptance by leaders there to convene the 2010 summit in Canada at L13; (B) **G8 enlargement** initiated by the host country wherein Italy might convene an expanded G8 summit at 13 or some other configuration in 2009 or the Canadians might do so in 2010, surely after consulting other G8 members and other potential candidate countries to assess their interest in becoming members of an enlarged G8 summit; (C) **a new U.S. presidential initiative** might occur early in 2009, either privately through intermediaries or publicly in an announcement, in support of an enlarged G8 summit or a new summit grouping to be convened in 2009; (D) a separate meeting in 2009 at leaders level on a major global issue, such as energy security and climate change to foster a post 2012 agreement, might occur in an expanded summit grouping, perhaps larger than 13, which might then **evolve gradually into a new regular annual summit grouping** to act as a global steering mechanism to continue to address global challenges; (E) an **unexpected expansion and new mandate** for summits might well emerge by **spontaneous combustion** among leaders meeting for another purpose or because of a sudden global crisis or event; and (F) the pattern over the last several years might continue into the future wherein the G8 continues to meet at eight, inviting other countries in for specific issues and for only part of the summit meetings, revealing **no consensus at leaders level** on summit expansion or reform.

Scenario A: Validation of the G8 Plus 5 Process *[Possible, but Unlikely]*

This scenario is a possible scenario where the pattern of G8 summits with partial openings to the leaders of the “outreach five” leaders continues until the summit in Italy when an assessment is scheduled to be made of the Heiligendamm Process. Given that this assessment is already on the agenda of the 2009 summit, it forces the issue of permanent membership of the Five in an expanded summit group to the fore. It could be foreseen that it would be embarrassing for the G8 leaders to say “no”, and drop the issue of summit expansion and essentially discontinue the pattern by turning the leaders of the Five away from future summits. This would be a visible snub which is hard to

imagine G8 leaders would want to embrace. But this does not mean that there is inevitability in the inexorable march toward a G13 or L13.

The respondents to this survey show an overwhelmingly sense that the G13 is “inadequate”, and more than 80 percent favor “other change in the leader-level summit, beyond thirteen”. This undoubtedly reflects a strand of thinking in relevant governments, beyond the particular officials and experts in this survey. But more importantly, perhaps, there is some indication at this writing that the government of Japan in 2008 may interrupt the pattern of invitations to the Five for part of the Hokkaido summit. If this is the case, the pattern since 2005 will have been broken in 2008 and there will be considerably less pressure in 2009 to transform the G8 Plus Five to a G13 or L13 on a permanent basis. As a result, while it is certainly possible that eventually the G8 Plus 5 process is validated and transformed into a new summit grouping of thirteen, it is far from certain and probably unlikely to occur as an extension of the existing pattern alone.

Scenario B: G8 Enlargement *[Possible but Unlikely]*

There is the factor of the convening power of the host country. This power can be influenced both in a negative and a positive way. It is possible that either Italy or Canada in the next two years could choose to convene the summits at thirteen instead of eight, or in some other configuration. No summit host would dare to send invitations to an enlarged group of countries without consulting first the G8 leaders themselves in the first instance, and the newly invited members in the second, to assure that this governance innovation by the host would be successful. The constraint of “what the traffic will bear” has been a highly influential one in the first decade of the 21st century.

The greatest champion of expansion of the G8 summits has been former Canadian prime minister, Paul Martin. He was the original proponent of transforming the country grouping of the G20 finance ministers, for which he was the inaugural chair as finance minister of Canada, into an L20, leaders-level 20 group. As prime minister of Canada in the early years of 2000, Paul Martin pushed hard in speeches and in private with G8 leaders to get them to accept the idea of meeting at leaders level at twenty. But he had no luck, in large measure because of a reluctance on the part of president George W. Bush to accept the proposal. Later, especially in the run-up to both Gleneagles and St. Petersburg in 2005-2006, Tony Blair spoke in public and in private in favor of G8 enlargement. In 2007, upon becoming president of France, Nicolas Sarkozy became a visible and vocal advocate of including the big emerging market economies into the G8. And in 2008 Gordon Brown called for G8 expansion in major speeches in both in India and in Boston. Still no action.

As a result, we have to conclude that the constraint of “what the traffic will bear” is greater than the convening power of the host country. Whereas it is possible that the conveners in 2009 and 2010 may succeed in becoming the author of transformative change, it seems unlikely that by themselves they will succeed unless there is a major shift in the U.S. position on summit reform, which is indeed possible.

Scenario C: A New U.S. Presidential Initiative *[Possible]*

The presidential election in the United States in November of 2008 presents an opportunity for a major shift in the U.S. approach to the world, as the early part of this chapter indicated. The respondents to this questionnaire decisively “favor the next president of the United States announcing her-his support for the 2009 summit in Italy to be convened in an expanded group of permanent members”. This provides not only support for such an initiative by the next president of the United States but a rationale for it, as indicated earlier, because 85 percent of the respondents from other major countries support this action. This means that a presidential initiative would be perceived by leaders in major countries as a signal of transformative change. In this context, a new president might find support for summit reform to be an attractive initiative to set a new tone and direction, establish a dramatically different approach to engaging the rest of the world, and to efficiently relate to the embodiment of a “new global order” without having to communicate with more than a dozen leaders, one leader at a time. It all depends, of course, on who the next president of the United States is, the circumstances that press in upon that person in early 2009, and what the priorities turn out to be. But given the context and the candidates, it is at least a possible option that might be exercised.

Scenario D:

Evolution from an Issue Specific Summit to Summit Reform *[Most Likely]*

This scenario is more complicated but perhaps even more likely. Energy security and climate change loom as the highest priority global challenge both because of the substance and the process currently under way to develop a post-Kyoto framework beyond 2012. The energy challenges alone are massive. There will be roughly 3 billion more people on the earth in 2050 than today, and 2 billion people today do not have access to electricity. This means that between now and 2050 the global energy productive system needs to try to meet the electricity demands of more new claimants than the current energy system developed over the last century already reaches. This is a long-term economic issue of the highest order. Secondly, the world, including the American public, have come to the view that it is better to invest in reducing carbon emissions now than to have to invest more later, when in any case it may be too late as well as being more expensive. This is a long-term environmental issue of the highest order. Together, energy security and climate change represent the central security issue looking ahead. The scope and scale of these issues, their global reach and political complexity provide one of the greatest opportunities for demonstrated, real, and effective global cooperation ever. Hence, an intensive effort by the United States to reverse its positions on climate change and not only join but lead the global effort to forge a new framework for the future provides precisely the specific opportunity to demonstrate a new U.S. approach to its role in the world that is needed now.

A crucial issue in moving this issue forward is the governance mechanism to do so. Indisputably, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the ultimate forum for finalizing a global agreement among all nations of the world. But the universal membership of the UN makes it too large a grouping to be an effective mechanism for reaching agreement on the

fundamentals. And the G8 is too small and unrepresentative a grouping for doing so. Therefore, there have been calls for an intermediate size group of major countries to work out a consensus on basic elements of an agreement to forward to the UNFFC for review, revision and final approval. In the joint efforts of CFGS, CIGI, Brookings, COMEXI and the OECD, we have prioritized energy security and climate change as the issue that most needs a larger summit grouping for progress and that it is the issue most likely to leverage summit expansion and reform. Form follows function in this high profile issue, increasing the likelihood of action.

But the matter becomes more complex. In 2007, the Bush administration convened a conference on climate change bringing together sixteen “major emitter economies” in August to discuss the post-Kyoto framework. (The sixteen consists of the G8 Plus 5 plus Australia, Indonesia, and South Korea.) This conference consisted of officials below ministerial level from environmental ministries of the sixteen countries. In the run-up to the Hokkaido summit in Japan in July of 2008, the Bush administration has requested that the Japanese hold a meeting the day after the G8 summit of the heads of the sixteen countries to discuss climate change. It is not clear what will happen, in part because the Japanese as of this writing have not yet clarified whether they will invite the “outreach five” to part of the G8 summit this year or not, nor whether the O5 countries will accept, if asked. Countries are extremely sensitive about offending the host of a summit, much less Japan. Nevertheless, there are reasons why the other fifteen countries might find it less than useful to meet with president Bush on an issue in which he is well known to be against carbon emission targets which lie at the heart of the agreement and are endorsed by the candidates in the U.S. presidential race. Therefore, it is quite uncertain, at this writing, whether or how this possible leaders-level summit of sixteen might unfold in 2008. It is interesting to note that a separate group of scholars working on a Brookings project on “managing global insecurity” came up with a G16 leaders group for global issues which includes the G8 Plus Five plus Egypt, Indonesia and Turkey. (Carlos Pascual, Brookings, Stephen Stedman, Stanford, and Bruce Jones, NYU.)

But what is more clear and perhaps more likely is that there may be a decision to convene an energy security and climate change summit of thirteen to sixteen to twenty countries in 2009 to try to forge a draft framework agreement to go to the UNFCCC by the end of 2009 when resolution on a final agreement is scheduled. This would avoid the issues of G8 enlargement or G8 Plus 5 validation having to be faced in 2009. The likelihood of an expanded summit for climate change being an attractive and indeed compelling idea for the major countries and for a new U.S. president is high. While both candidates will take major steps to reverse the U.S. position on this issue, Barack Obama has been clearest about the governance innovations he would sponsor, if elected president of the United States. His Energy Fact Sheet on his website states that:

“Obama will create a Global Energy Forum – based on the G8+5, which included all G-8 members plus Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa – of the world’s largest emitters to focus exclusively on global energy and environmental issues. Maintaining a standing international body focused on these issues will give a forum for all of the major emitters – past, present and future – to discuss efforts to combat climate change.”

Other major countries undoubtedly will push for some intermediate sized forum in which to negotiate with the United States under a new president in 2009, no matter who is elected president. If such an intermediate sized summit grouping were formed to deal with energy security and climate change and were successful in doing so, then it would set an example of effectiveness and a precedent for establishing a regular annual summit grouping of a similar size to address global issues and guide the international system of institutions in dealing with them. This is a more complex, convoluted pathway to summit expansion and reform but it ends up evolving out of practice rather than principle, events rather than ideas, and positive success rather than perceived weaknesses of the G8 as an unrepresentative, ineffective and illegitimate group to be addressing global issues. The world ends up with a new global steering mechanism, that 80 percent of U.S. respondents to the summit reform survey and 94 percent of those responding from other major countries think the world needs. This may be the most likely scenario for achieving summit reform.

Scenario E: Spontaneous Combustion *[Possible]*

In contrast to the one-step-at-a-time, slow, evolving progression toward an expanded, reformed, permanent summit grouping that meets annually, as just described, it is also possible that an event, crisis or opportunity presents itself which vaults summit reform forward in a “big bang” fashion. A simultaneous terrorist attack in the capitals of selected G8 and emerging market countries would be a stylized version of an event which could trigger such an initial meeting that would lead inexorably, perhaps, to permanent summit reform. Or leaders gathered at the inauguration of the next president of the United States in January of 2009 might spontaneously come up with the idea that the summit in Italy in 2009 should be the turning point in the history of the G8 and bring to life a new summit grouping for the new global era of the 21st century. Top leaders do not always appreciate being staff driven and like reserving spontaneous actions to themselves and among each other. “Spontaneous combustion” of this sort is creative energy which can shape events and institutions. It would not be the first time in history that such a turning point occurred. It is perhaps not the most likely scenario, but it is a possible pathway for reform.

Scenario F: Continuing Stalemate on Summit Reform *[Very Possible]*

Finally, a very possible scenario looking ahead is that nothing happens. As obvious as the arguments for a larger grouping are, as clear as the weaknesses of the G8 appear to most observers, and as much concern as there is in the world today about the inadequacy of the current system of international institutions to meet global challenges, it is well within the realm of the possible that nothing happens on summit reform in the next couple of years. Every leader of a G8 country is importantly constrained by weak internal support, low polling ratings, and an inability to play a strong leadership role in the international arena. The only wild card in the scenario for 2009 is who will be president of the United States. That could change the dynamic. But it may not.

One of the great divides in U.S. foreign policy in this election year is the difference between an America that draws its strength from its own preoccupations with its national beliefs, values and

ideals and continues to try to form alliances and to project power based on them, and an America that draws its strength from its historic and continuing fusion of pluralism and unity translated into a vision of the world as culturally, politically and economically diverse which can nonetheless come together around a common agenda in which compromise and cooperation are both possible and necessary.

History in the end is unpredictable, which is what endows it with both opportunity and responsibility. We will have to wait to see whether processes, issues, events or leaders drive summit reform to a breakthrough or whether the continuing stalemate will prevail. Much would seem to depend on the outcome of the U.S. presidential election if the current stalemate is to be broken.

VII.-Concluding Remarks

However solid, credible and consensual the views of the leading figures surveyed in this chapter may be, the truth is that despite the logic of summit reform as a way to increase the representativeness, effectiveness and legitimacy of the international institutions, steering mechanisms and system, the leaders simply may not take the steps necessary to reform the system, as clear as those may be. As a consequence, among the options of spontaneous combustion, a U.S. presidential initiative, G8 enlargement and the validation of the G8 Plus Five outreach process, none of these may actually transpire though there are reasons why each of them might occur or even should occur. In the end, some combination of continuing stalemate and gradual evolution seem to be the more likely combination of force vectors that will drive the future than more deliberate decisions and dramatic transformative steps. Nonetheless, one would have to say, however much this hybrid scenario of muddling through may appeal to our sense of realism, the world does indeed seem to be at an historic juncture where new global leadership and governance innovation are called for. A reformist thrust would seem to be the most promising for addressing the global challenges of the 21st century of most interest to most of the world's people. Why is this too much to expect when the case is so clear, at least among those who are directly involved? U.S. leadership seems to be the biggest element that will determine the future of summit reform and global politics.

Bibliography

- Achebe, Chinua (2000), *Home and Exile*, New York: Anchor Books
- Ahmed, Akbar. 2007. *Journey into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization*. Washington: The Brookings Institution Press.
- Alexandroff, Alan S. (ed) 2008. *Can the World Be Governed? Possibilities for Effective Multilateralism*, Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Bradford, Colin I., Jr. and Johannes F. Linn (eds.). 2007. *Global Governance Reform: Breaking the Stalemate*. Washington: The Brookings Institution Press.
- Halperin, Morton H., Jeffrey Laurenti, Peter Rundlet, and Spencer P. Boyers (eds.) 2007. *The Power and Superpower: Global Leadership and Exceptionalism in the 21st Century*. Center for American Progress and The Century Foundation, New York: The Century Foundation Press.
- Ikenberry, G. John. 2002. *American Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Joffe, Josef. 2006. *Uberpower: The Imperial Temptation of America*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Kagan, Robert. 2003. *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*. New York: Random House.
- Leonard, Mark. 2005. *Why Europe will Run the 21st Century*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Martin, Paul (2005), "A Global Answer to Global Problems", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 84, No. 3, 2005.
- Mazarr, Michael J. 2007. *Unmodern Men in the Modern World: Radical Islam, Terrorism, and the War on Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nye, Joseph S., Jr. 2002. *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mahbubani, Kishore. 2008. *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East*. New York, Public Affairs.
- Obama, Barack. 2008.
<http://www.barackobama.com/issues/pdf/EnergyFactSheet.pdf>
- Steel, Ronald. 1995. *Temptations of a Superpower*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.