

And finally, there is a third institutional variable of relevance, in this case relating to the expansion of both the *summit's* preparatory and follow-up phases. This expansion has led some officials to conclude that the summit process *itself* has become more institutionalized over the last summit cycle. In turn, this has precipitated an overall rise in compliance by both Canada and the US during the summit's third cycle compared to the previous two. According to a Canadian official:

There was an inherent reluctance to institutionalize the process, although I think its fair to say that over time, there became more frequent meetings after each Summit, and the meetings to prepare for the next Summit began earlier than before. So it became almost a full-time job and certainly became an annual exercise as opposed to a summer event - not only in the preparatory phases, but also in the stock-taking of what had been achieved.¹⁸

B. Political Control Exercised by G7 Heads of State and Government

In addition to institutions and regimes, the element of *political control* also offers explanations for compliance with G7 commitments. The representation of leaders themselves at the Summit table seems to ensure that the decisions they reach, and the commitments they make, carry added weight given that there are no higher-level bureaucrats at home to whom their decisions are deferred. As a result, when a head of state or government becomes personally associated with a Summit commitment, compliance is higher than it would be if the commitments would have been arrived at by a group of ministers. As such, when the Prime Minister and President are directly involved and personally engaged, that has a major impact on policy and the priority of policy on the home front. While leaders are equally directly involved at a minimum level on all Summit commitments, and the communique is released in their name, in practice, their degree of personal involvement (in contrast to the preparatory work by their

¹⁸ Interview with Senior Government Official, Montreal, January 31, 1997.