

ministers meet only once a year, five months after the Summit.

An additional *international* institutional variable of relevance is apparent on the environment side of the agenda. The empirical findings suggest that although there is no net compliance during the period 1989-1991 in either climate change or biodiversity, beginning in 1992 and onwards, there is a high level of sustained environmental compliance. The rise in compliance during this period is primarily due to two factors. First, a new era in environmental diplomacy was launched with the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Convening just three weeks later in Munich for their annual Summit meeting, the leaders agreed on the importance of ratifying the climate change and biodiversity conventions, and stressed the salience of implementing the decisions embraced. Thus, as the Earth Summit quickly developed into a nested regime¹⁷, a "Rio effect" is observed corresponding with a higher level of environmental compliance by Canada and the US with the agreements reached at Rio and endorsed in a particular form at the G7 Summit.

The 1991/92 "Rio Rise" also coincided with the institutionalization of the G7 environment ministerials, beginning in Germany just prior to the 1992 Munich Summit, and then continuing in Florence, Italy in 1994, Hamilton, Canada in 1995, Cabourg, France in 1996, and Miami in 1997. These G7 environment ministerials have proceeded to endorse the Rio conventions and have emphasized the importance of their continued implementation.

¹⁷ The Earth Summit is referred to as a "nested regime" because of the institutional developments that rapidly transpired vis-a-vis the Rio declarations following the conclusion on UNCED in 1992. For example, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development was established in the aftermath of UNCED as the follow-up body for the Rio conventions. Moreover, permanent secretariats were established for both the Climate Change and Biodiversity Conventions in Bonn and Montreal respectively. Moreover, permanent secretariats were established for both the Climate Change and Biodiversity Conventions in Bonn and Montreal respectively, with each possessing the institutional underpinnings of a more formal regime: fixed headquarters, a permanent secretariat, budgetary allocations and the creation of binding and enforceable rules.