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The sporadic efforts to stem mission creep have obviously not been successful. While the Summit now includes only leaders, the bureaucratization has been “downloaded” with multiple meetings of Ministers and sous-sherpas that generate the paper. The new minimalism was largely a mirage. As new global issues emerge — drugs, “money laundering”, terrorism are examples — leaders feel it essential to put them on the agenda, whether because of domestic concerns, or the media spotlight, or pressure from the international NGO networks (of which more shortly). Or, indeed, all of the above since the forces are inter-related.

Many would argue that mission creep was inevitable. The Cold War is over and the former Soviet empire must be integrated into the global market economy. Deepening integration — or globalization — has exposed an array of “global bads”, diverse, diffuse and interrelated such as environmental concerns; poverty; financial crises; the increasing marginalization of the poorest countries; disease; terrorism; etc. etc. Domestic concerns over job creation; the structural adjustments which inevitably accompany expanding trade; the impact of accelerating technological change are linked to international developments. All these issues are extremely complex and defy neat, clear or short-term solutions. So once on the agenda they are unlikely to disappear. And “solutions” will often involve institutional reform — likely a long and often contentious process as the initiative on the international financial system launched at Halifax so amply illustrates, when even today some of the most important policy issues remain unresolved. And, it should be remembered, the Summit is considered the only forum available for crisis management whether it be the Russian economy, Kosovo or, as we will see at Kananaskis, the “new war”.

So, this argument goes, mission creep is a product of the globalizing world we live in. And although Summits may not be the only game in town — since the 1980’s they’ve proliferated, so there are now regional summits, UN Summits, FAO Summits and many others — none the less the G7/8 is considered the apex. Thus, this argument contends, while continuing efforts to scale-back should be made, mission creep can’t really be avoided, though it probably should be contained.

While I will turn to this issue in my last remarks I must add one more, indeed the most significant, aspect of the evolution of summitry in the