

foster domestic policy cooperation to achieve limited, clearly explicated, international objectives. But a brief history of summitry amply demonstrates what is sometimes called “mission creep” — writ large, one could say, despite periodic attempts to go back to the beginning.

In the early years, from 1975 to 1980, while the summit did focus on basic economic issues, including financial stability and trade, it was the only forum available for crisis management and demonstrated its strategic advantage over the large international institutions in flexibility or adaptability. Because of the OPEC shock, energy was on the table from the outset as was trade, and the Summit played a major role in the conclusion of the Tokyo Round in 1978. The 1978 Bonn Summit sought to move beyond cooperation to coordination, involving a linkage between macroeconomies and energy policies among the main players. This proved to be the only example of such ambitious international coordination and generated rancorous debate as to whether the approach was basically sound and should establish a new paradigm or seriously perverse, contributing significantly to the economic problems of the early 1980's, especially inflation (though the second OPEC shock was the main culprit in that regard). In any case, coordination and linkage was a no-no as the 1980's as Ronald Thatcherism arrived.⁵

During the 1980's the approach to macropolicy was “get your own house in order”. Cooperation, yes, but mainly through consultation and exchange of information.⁶ A major change was the move from economic into political issues, a priority for President Reagan as the Cold War heated up. The 1983 Williamsbrug Summit, preceded by Reagan's famous speech condemning the Soviet Union as the “evil empire”, was the first which included East-West security issues. But traditional issues such as trade — the effort to launch and sustain the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations — and macroeconomic issues, especially inflation fighting, were also prominent. In addition, relations with developing countries first appeared in Venice, in 1980; environment and manned space stations in London in 1984; cooperation in science and technology in Bonn in 1985; terrorism, hijacking and drugs in Tokyo the following year. Mission creep had begun, communiqués grew longer, and political annexes were issued. Finally, an important institutional change was made in Tokyo, in 1986 — the creation of a new summit forum, the G7 Finance Ministers. It was significant in many ways but in the present