VENICE Summit

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Venice Talks Conclude in a Mood Of Satisfaction but Little Progress

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VENICE, June 10 — The 13th conference of the major non-Communist industrial nations ended today with a sober appraisal of the world economy and a series of generalized proposals to deal with persistent problems like unemployment and protectionism.

Although little new ground was broken on political or economic questions, all participants proclaimed satisfaction.

Leaders of the seven nations — Britain, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, the United States and West Germany — spent their last working session on economic questions and then issued a long communiqué dealing with such questions as trade, coordination of economic policies, debt relief for sub-Saharan Africa, exchange rates and agriculture. [Text, page A16.]

No breakthroughs were made and none were claimed. But President François Mitterrand said "a few advances" had been made on the long road toward alleviating some of the world's economic problems.

In other statements, the leaders took a tough line on South Africa and promised heightened international cooperation in coping with the AIDS epidemic and with drugs. [Page A12.]

U.S. Had to Settle for Less

The United States, which came to this three-day summit meeting with the amplest agenda for action, had to settle for much less specific commitments than it had sought.

But Treasury Secretary James A. Baker 3d called the conference a success and said, "It compares favorably with past summits." He described the absence of "a major contretemps" as a good sign, not a "detrimental" one.

Sir Geoffrey Howe, the British Foreign Secretary, for whom this was the ninth such meeting, termed the conference "very businesslike."

Asked tonight as he appeared on ABC News what was the most important development at the conference, Howard H. Baker Jr., the White House chief of staff, responded, "I think the most important thing is there are probably no surprises."

Frank C. Carlucci, the national security adviser, said the political talks produced "all that we sought."

Unlike some of his counterparts, President Reagan held no news conference. He will remain in Venice an extra day and meet with reporters Thursday before flying to West Berlin and Bonn on Friday and then on to Washington.

Venice produced idyllic weather — a sunny, breezy day with one of the storied, pale-blue Adriatic skies — for the final day of the gathering. The church and bell tower of San Giorgio Maggiore, on the island where the sessions were held, stood out as crisply as in a painting by Canaletto.

But there were widespread grumblings about this conference among the participants — about the number of people involved, about a lack of informality and, especially, about the overwhelming security apparatus assembled by the Italians, in large part to meet American requirements.

'Gigantomanic Security'

Chancellor Helmut Kohl of West Germany bemoaned what he called the lack of opportunity for "deeper conversation" and ascribed it to "this giganto-manic security operation."

Mr. Mitterrand struck the same note, commenting on "an excess of ritual" and remarking with his characteristic understated humor. "We continued to be so very numerous and one felt oneself so very well protected here."

On the American side, W. Allen Wallis, Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, charged that the French had an almost "quasi-religious" dislike of summit conferences.

Most of the participants appeared to take particular satisfaction from the fact that they had not been pressed much by the others.

Hideo Watanabe, Japan's spokesman, said his country was "grateful that there has been nothing that can be called Japan-bashing," adding, "That is as it should be."

Japan had feared it would come under attack for not doing enough to cut its huge trade surplus. German officials expressed gratitude that neither the United States nor anyone else had renewed demands that Germany stimulate more rapid economic growth and thus act as a "locomotive" for the other European economies.

By all accounts, Mr. Reagan and his chief aides made little or no effort to push either the Japanese or the Germans on those issues. Nor did they push for specific language on political questions such as the Persian Gulf.

A senior official of one of the European countries said of the President, "He was a pussycat here."

A typical point on which Mr. Reagan gave way was the elimination of agricultural subsidies. In a speech only last Friday, he had said he would push for language in the communiqué binding the seven countries to reaching that goal by 2000.

Treasury Secretary Baker conceded that the President had not done so, and the communiqué, mainly because of German resistance to doing more, simply reaffirmed the agreement to a slower process approved in May by the Oragnization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Mr. Baker saw the highlight of the meeting, from an economic point of view, as the formal adoption of new methods for coordinating policies.

He said they "now have a political mechanism for promoting action" on economic issues. But the communiqué represented a compromise. It said six newly defined "performance indicators," such as exchange rates and growth rates, would be used only "to determine whether there are significant deviations from an intended course that require consideration of remedial actions."

The French had wanted to go much further, with a trigger mechanism that would have automatically instituted changes in policy if the indicators gave evidence of trouble. The United States had wanted a trigger that would automatically convene a meeting of the seven nations' finance ministers. Neither was successful.

On third-world debt, as well, the French had to settle for less. As a goad to the United States to spend more on aid to developing countries, France had wanted to mandate a spending level for all seven countries of seven-tenths of 1 per cent, more than twice what they say the United States now spends. The figure is mentioned in the communiqué, but it is not endorsed.

The nations conceded in a generally somber though optimistic review of the world economy that the correction of trade imbalances, with some countries running large deficits and some large surpluses, "will be a long and difficult process" in which "exchange rate changes alone will not solve the problem."

But Mr. Kohl, the leader of one of the "surplus countries" that are supposed to "strengthen domestic demand," said at his news conference that "anyone who came to Venice expecting the Germans to play the locomotive now knows that this will not occur with us and with me."

Mr. Reagan, leader of one of the "deficit countries" pledged to reduce the deficits, said happily in an aside to reporters that he had not felt any pressure to make a more rapid or more concerted assault on the deficit. "No," he said, "we've been able to show the extent to which we're reducing it."

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