

positive comment on the Canadian decision to scale back and hold the meeting in a “tiny Rocky Mountains resort”, but asserted that this was insufficient. What was also required was a “commitment to hold the next G8 only when there is a burning topic to discuss”. Just how and who would make such a decision was not explained. Still the message was clear — and not only from this source — that there is a need to recognize “the limits of global summits and making them work”. Few could disagree.

But this is easier said than done, of course. There are two features of summitry that need careful examination. One is the membership. The G7, still the core of the institution reflects the world of 1975 and not the transformation of East Asia, the rise of China and the growing intensity of North-South issues in, for example, the WTO. In addition to membership is the mission creep and rhetorical inflation described earlier. This is undoubtedly far more difficult to cope with as I shall shortly explain.

The only change in summit membership since 1975 has been the inclusion of Russia. Margaret Thatcher invited President Gorbachev to attend the London Summit in 1990, a striking if largely symbolic affirmation of the end of the Cold War. After the demise of the Soviet Union, Boris Yeltsin replaced Gorbachev but the Russians participated only in political discussions. But the G7 became the G8 only in 1998, and even then Russia’s role in economic cooperation was understandably limited.

There have been a plethora of proposals to expand the G8.<sup>10</sup> The most popular candidate in recent years has been the G20, created and chaired by Canada’s Paul Martin, which includes the G8 and a number of developing countries from Latin America, Asia and Africa.<sup>11</sup> The main argument for expansion is that the institution should include developing countries and reflect a better regional balance if it is to consider the major issues of a globalizing world. Efforts have been made to meet with selected groups of developing countries *en marge* the official sessions — the latest example being a dinner in Genoa with members of the African members of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development or NEPAD. This *ad hocery* is considered too little and too late and reflective of the episodic nature of the forum which is unsuited to today’s more complex and rapidly changing world.

But would a G-N summit be able to foster consensus on key global issues or cope with unanticipated crises? Would it not turn the forum into a