

Breaking Global Deadlocks

MEETING REPORT



Reflections on Global Governance

Burrowing Owl, Oliver, British Columbia
Meeting Report #2
February 26-28, 2008

This is one of a series of meeting reports from the Breaking Global Deadlocks project. These meetings attempt to refine the concept of how leaders play an instrumental role in addressing pressing global issues. Past meetings have included prominent individuals, including former leaders, summit sherpas, and deputy ministers from most of the countries that have been identified as potential members of a new leaders' forum (the G8 countries plus key emerging and regional powers). The main focus of the gathering at Oliver, British Columbia, was to assess progress on the current phase of the Breaking Global Deadlocks project, plan for the next two-year phase, and look ahead to possible future initiatives. Discussion centered mainly on evaluating past initiatives in global governance and promising possibilities for future work.

The Evolution of the Project

The initial session focused on how the project had evolved since 2003 and what had been learned so far. Participants discussed reactions in various countries to the project's core ideas: that the role of government leaders in international decision-making is critical; that existing international institutions are incapable of resolving many deadlocked issues, especially with respect to global commons issues and issues connected with the impacts of globalization. Furthermore, the G8 in particular is insufficiently representative to confront those key issues effectively.

The Project

The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), in partnership with the Centre for Global Studies at the University of Victoria (CFGS) and with the support of several other organizations, has since 2003 led an extended multinational effort to explore the practical prospects for significant reforms to the institutions through which governments decide key international issues.

Since its inception, the project has undergone several phases. During the initial phase, the concept of a leader's level G20 summit, or L20, was explored (www.L20.org). This top-level, intergovernmental forum would facilitate a commitment to breaking global deadlocks on issues that cannot be resolved through other mechanisms. Pressing global issues were examined in depth to test the hypothesis that a more inclusive and well-prepared summit process would yield significant progress.

The project seeks to build upon the L20 project outcomes by exploring in greater depth the importance of leadership in formulating policy and catalyzing solutions to pressing global problems.

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The Challenge

Response to the original "L20 idea"¹ for summit reform has been variable across countries. The need to incorporate the large, rapidly developing regional powers (as exemplified by the "G5" countries: China, India, Mexico, Brazil, and South Africa) into global decision making at the highest level is gaining broader acceptance. This is reflected in recent comments by world leaders such as Gordon Brown, Nicolas Sarkozy, and others.² Participants agreed that the L20 label had been outgrown and that a sharpened project message was now required.

Developments

With the current divided state of the G8 and the changes that might flow from the US presidential election later this year, there are potentially significant shifts leading up to the 2010 G8 Summit (which Canada will chair). One must also consider the implications of the dynamics of the ongoing G8/G5 relationship, namely the growing dissatisfaction of the G5 with the way in which their Summit involvement is being orchestrated and limited.³ The consensus at this meeting was that the manner in which the Japanese are managing preparations for the Hokkaido Summit was likely to bring G5 concerns to a head, to the point that leaders might decline an invitation to the Summit if they are not invited as full and equal participants. The G5 desire for meaningful engagement with the G8 on global problems (for which their cooperation is critical) is currently not being met. This impending conflict demonstrates the need for institutional change and has led the G5 to develop a clearer sense of their collective interests.

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The issue of whether the project's objectives should be expressed specifically in terms of G8 enlargement or more generally in terms of the need for new mechanisms at the level of leaders was a recurring theme at the meeting. Participants generally agreed that the likelihood of formal G8 expansion was not high in the near future, and that consensus on this as a priority does not currently appear to exist among G5 countries.

A Different Approach

The participants explored the question of why institutional reform is a challenge despite evidence that current arrangements are inadequate. For many G8 leaders, the current arrangements are seen as "safe" and "comfortable." For this reason, building on the G8 is a non-starter – instead, calling for a new institution (or institutional arrangement) might make more sense as a project focus.

The attitudes and interests of the various G8 and G5 countries were reviewed. Some participants noted that some cooperation between G8 and G5 countries is proceeding at levels below that of leaders, and that the Heiligendamm process should not be prejudged or written off as a failure before it has had the opportunity to generate results.

Participants agreed that if a new G8/G5 relationship was tested at Hokkaido, the market for new ideas on global cooperation would be increased. The project should have a "package" of policy prescriptions and approaches on the shelf ready to be put forward. A similar opportunity would be presented if the global economy deteriorated sharply in the next few years. Most participants thought that the project should focus on alternative mechanisms to addressing global challenges rather than the departure point of G8 reform. In sum, it would be expedient to refocus the initiative as one of global governance innovation.

Canadian participants reflected on the implications for Canada of major institutional changes and the need to reframe the issues in terms of national interests in order to gain the support of the current government. All participants considered the possibility of new approaches

¹ For background, see www.L20.org

² See http://www.g-8.de/Content/EN/Artikel/_g8-summit/2007-06-08-heiligendamm-prozess_en.html for a summary of the intentions and goals of the Heiligendamm process

³ See for India's response

from the US following the presidential election, and it was pointed out that any incoming president would face a lengthy agenda, with this particular area possibly not a priority. On the other hand, there was a sense that the Democrats would be receptive to more flexible and effective international mechanisms. The debate over trade issues (especially with regard to China) has begun to ramp up and could inhibit the acceptance of an enlarged G8 summit. US leadership on multilateral engagement cannot be assumed.

Next Steps

Priorities

The future direction of the Breaking Global Deadlocks project was the subject of considerable debate. Participants noted that the upcoming Mexico City meeting will focus strictly on the international governance issues, while the Paris meeting will deal with climate change. Both are examples of the sort of deadlocked problem that could benefit from the reform of international decision-making institutions.

This led to a debate that continued throughout the rest of the meeting: should the focus be on addressing specific governance issues or on the larger question of governance reform, including the expansion of the G8 summit?

Participants emphasized the need for the project to be precise about the ideas being "sold," saying a consistent, easy to communicate "package" of ideas needs to be developed. The point was made that project participants were by and large experts in governance; from this perspective, they had a useful set of views, insights, and ideas to offer as a product. It became evident during discussion that the two areas of focus were not mutually exclusive but were both potential elements of a schedule of meetings between now and 2010.

Summary of Project Initiatives

Participants proposed a number of initiatives to achieve the goals of the project and disseminate key findings and recommendations:

- A small group should try to meet with foreign policy advisors of the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates in spring 2008 to brief them on the ideas generated by the project.
- Representatives from the project should continue to meet with sherpas, political advisors and policy makers

from both G8 and G5 countries to generate interest and awareness of the project's aims.

- Broader dissemination of project ideas should be pursued, including perhaps a significant op-ed piece for Canadian newspapers drafted jointly by three former Canadian sherpas. The Canadian piece would be a hard-headed analysis of possible future changes of key international councils and the Canadian national interest in helping to shape that evolution.
- A prominent US foreign policy expert should be commissioned to write a major article that would examine the need and options for American re-engagement in the international community in the wake of the Bush presidency. The article could incorporate ideas from the project and adapt them to the particular context of a new American president in search of transformative ideas.

A "Think Tank" Network

In this session, project organizers sought input on the advisability and usefulness of more formally constituting a Global Policy and Governance Network (GPAGNet) as a collective effort by CFGS, CIGI, and IDRC. This proposal received a positive response, with participants indicating that establishing a more formal network on global dialogue would be useful. It was decided that the network's work should not be limited to G8-related issues but should address broad issues where global dialogue is needed; that is, the network should be used to facilitate definition and communication of national interests by individual countries. The new network could provide governments with an efficient and effective way of arranging new ideas, assessing reaction across the globe to new initiatives, and facilitating real-time access to a credible set of international experts.

International demand for a group such as GPAGNet must be assessed. It was noted that thus far it appears that Japan, Mexico, Italy, and the OECD would find a network along these lines helpful. In addition, the network could be expected to generate demand through its work. To be truly global, however, the network must have more representation from Africa, engaging people from the different African regions.

Overall, participants agreed that work on GPAGNet should proceed, although emphasis was placed on the need to develop a clear mandate/mission, and no resolution was reached on whether the network should be associated with (funded through) any other body.

Future Outlook

Considerable discussion focused on the direction of the project in the next phase. Some participants suggested that there would be a need for a project meeting to assess the outcome of the Hokkaido Summit, especially if G8/G5 relations worsened. A reassessment of the issues that are being addressed was also suggested; for example, whether it is possible to say anything new about climate change, given its prominence. Perhaps the project (and/or GPAGNet) should be looking at emerging issues such as the regulation of synthetic genomes or of geo-engineering. At the same time, participants asserted that focusing on critical and deadlocked issues that only leaders can adequately address should remain the main goal of the project.

Some participants suggested that upcoming project meetings should focus on "outreach," mainly to G5 countries such as Mexico, Brazil and India, with the inclusion of Nigeria in addition to South Africa in order to better represent the diversity of Africa. Participants also pointed to the need to mobilize support for project ideas through "inreach" aimed at G8 countries. In this regard, Russia was cited as worthy of special attention. A review of existing plans for meetings over the coming year revealed that many of the suggestions for outreach and inreach were already being covered (although meetings would probably have to be added in Washington DC and Africa). In order to reach out to the business or corporate community, it was suggested that a briefing be prepared for key funders already active in the globalization/development field, such as Carlos Slim, Jim Balsillie, and Frank Giustra.

It was agreed that a communications strategy for the project is needed. Various approaches to a heightened media presence were proposed, including the drafting of op-ed articles in key publications and background briefings for prominent commentators. The point was made that, in order to have a significant media impact, project proponents would need to present ideas that were new, easily understood, and timely.

The Development Dimension

The session began with broad acknowledgment that the development assistance system was in a perilous state. The world has changed – levels of official development assistance are dwarfed by flows of private capital and the activities of sovereign wealth funds. Participants questioned the efficacy of existing approaches to encouraging development, especially in Africa. The massive and intractable nature of the problems facing that continent

were outlined. Among the participants, an informed and insightful discussion on aspects of development and development assistance ensued, but it was confirmed that this was not a topic that would be fruitful for leaders to address in a leader's forum. There were many insights shared by the participants with respect to compensatory development initiatives that might be included in package deals formulated to address the development question.

Conclusions

The major outcome of this meeting was an agreement the "message" derived from the project must be refined and clarified if it is to have a major impact. It was determined that this should be a generalized message, separate from specific proposals for G8 enlargement or G8/G5 merger, but should retain key project findings. Namely, that the role of leaders in resolving deadlocks is critical and that existing international institutions are incapable of effectively addressing the challenges of globalization. The leading regional, rapidly developing countries must be an integral element of the central structures of global decision making from the start; and good preparation is crucial for the success of any leader's process.

It was articulated that the "product" or "message" of the project must be ready for swift deployment in response to events (for example, a G8/G5 split at Hokkaido or a significant global economic downturn). This will require the development of a coherent communications strategy aimed at ensuring that the project's final stages produce results (i.e., influence international actors and events). This strategy will include the drafting of op-ed articles, backgrounding respected commentators, and commissioning articles in leading journals.

In sum, the project's upcoming schedule of meetings should reflect both "outreach" to G5 (and other) countries as well as "inreach" to mobilize support among G8 countries. A variation on the Mexico City agenda should be used as the template for these meetings. Ongoing work through the OECD should continue. Specifically with respect to developing support for project ideas in the United States, care should be taken to act in a non-partisan fashion and advantage should be taken of the possible lower ebb of political activity in late spring and early summer.

All present agreed that the work that is being undertaken to establish GPAGNet should proceed. The network's mandate should match the newly refined and clarified project "message." The administrative, management, and funding aspects of the network remain to be

finalized. The participants' findings suggest that the issue of development and development assistance should not be subjects for consideration at a leaders' forum. Nevertheless, there will inevitably be a "development assistance" element in any set of actions at a summit that breaks a global deadlock on a critical issue.

This meeting made it clear that although promising initiatives are in place, there is still much work to do. The project is well positioned to make meaningful contributions in the area of global governance reform. Future initiatives should build on this and offer compelling policy advice and recommendations for summit reform and effectiveness. The international architecture is in a state of transition, providing the need for expert policy advice and recommendations in order to face global challenges and chart the most promising way forward.

This report was prepared by Barry Carin, Associate Director, CFGS, and Senior Fellow, CIGI; Clint Abbott, Senior Researcher, CIGI, and Research Associate, CFGS; and Laura Innis, Project Officer, CIGI.

Agenda

February 26, 2008

Participants arrive.

February 27, 2008

09:00 – 09:15 Welcome and Introduction: Chair – John English

09:15 – 11:00 **Stock Taking – Looking Backward**

Chair – Paul Heinbecker

The project asked: How to bring institutional change to an outdated architecture and make the G8 more effective and representative? How to Break Global Deadlocks?

This session will focus on:

- *What we did – reports on the L20, Breaking Global Deadlocks, Widening and Deepening projects and the Japan February 12-13 Meeting.*
- *What we learned.*

11:30 – 12:30 **The Immediate Future: Where Do We Go From Here?**

Chair – David Victor

Review of current plans for Mexico City (March 10-11, "The Future of the G8 Summit and Global Deadlocks") and for Paris (March 31-April 1, "The Economics of Climate Change Policy"). Should further dissemination efforts be planned?

13:30 – 14:30 **"Think Tank" Network**

Chair – Shyam Saran

This session will help prepare for an April 2 meeting with OECD Secretary-General Gurría to review the objectives, working methods, membership, and budgeting for the proposed "think tank" network.

14:30 – 17:00 **Advice For Planned Meetings**

Chair – Andrés Rozental

For the forthcoming meetings (Italy, Fall 2008, Rio de Janeiro – November 13-14, 2008; White Oak Plantation, Florida, late 2008; New Delhi, 2009; Beijing, 2009, Waterloo, CIGI 09), what themes should we highlight to demonstrate the potential of a well prepared enlarged Leaders summit (New parameters for Global Security, Global Infectious Diseases, Finance, Climate Change/Energy, Internationalization of the Nuclear Fuel Cycle, Other prospects)?

February 28, 2008

09:00 – 11:45 **The Development Dimension**

Chair – John Sewell

11:45 – 12:00 **Wrap Up**

Chair – Gordon Smith

Breaking any significant global deadlock will require credible action on the development front. Given the lack of consensus on the development process, and the difficulties with setting priorities, policy coherence, and the multiplicity of donors, what initiatives make sense? What institutional reforms should be pursued? What concepts and dimensions should be emphasized?

Participant List

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Associate Director, CFGS

Margaret Catley Carlson

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John English

Executive Director, CIGI

Robert Fowler

Former Canadian Ambassador to the UN

Peter Harder

Former Deputy Foreign Minister

Peter Heap

Senior Research Associate, CFGS

Paul Heinbecker

Former Ambassador to the UN

Barbara McDougall

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs

David Morrison

Communications Director, UNDP

Andres Rozental

Chairman, Board of Trustees, Mexican Council of Foreign Relations

Shyam Saran

Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of India

John Sewell

Senior Scholar, Woodrow Wilson Centre

Gordon Smith

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About the Centre for Global Studies

The Centre for Global Studies was created in 1998 with a mandate to conduct collaborative, policy-oriented inquiry into the impacts of globalization on a broad spectrum of inter-related issues encompassing international governance and finance, the environment, security, and sustainable development. Building on the university's existing base of interdisciplinary expertise, the Centre provides a vehicle for bridging scholarship with the needs of policy-makers for concise and accessible analysis in response to the pressing challenges of global change.

Since its formation, the CFGS has evolved rapidly to establish an extensive program of international research and development assistance activity. Through its innovative "centre of centres" model, the CFGS provides infrastructure and administrative support to a diverse group of associates, who operate within the following six core activities:

- Division of Globalization and Governance
- Division of Technology and International Development
- Institute for Child Rights and Development
- International Women's Rights Project
- Iraqi Marshlands Project
- Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium

Common themes that unify the research work of associates at the Centre include an engagement with action-oriented approaches to democratic reform and capacity building, and an overriding commitment to the advancement of human and environmental security objectives. The Centre is also concerned with issues of state security, an interest it pursues through participation in a variety of global and multilateral initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict and arms proliferation.

In addition to its core team of associates, the Centre sponsors multiple student internships, and maintains an extensive network of international research partners, with whom it collaborates on a project-to project basis.

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About the Centre for International Governance Innovation

The Centre for International Governance Innovation is a Canadian-based, independent, non-partisan think tank that addresses international governance challenges. Led by a group of experienced practitioners and distinguished academics, CIGI supports research, forms networks, advances policy debate, builds capacity, and generates ideas for multilateral governance improvements. Conducting an active agenda of research, events, and publications, CIGI's interdisciplinary work includes collaboration with policy, business and academic communities around the world.

CIGI's work is organized into six broad issue areas: shifting global power; environment and resources; health and social governance; trade and finance; international law, institutions and diplomacy; and global and human security. Research is spearheaded by CIGI's distinguished fellows who comprise leading economists and political scientists with rich international experience and policy expertise.

CIGI has also developed IGLOO™ (International Governance Leaders and Organizations Online). IGLOO is an online network that facilitates knowledge exchange between individuals and organizations studying, working or advising on global issues. Thousands of researchers, practitioners, educators and students use IGLOO to connect, share and exchange knowledge regardless of social, political and geographical boundaries.

CIGI was founded in 2002 by Jim Balsillie, co-CEO of RIM (Research In Motion), and collaborates with and gratefully acknowledges support from a number of strategic partners, in particular the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario. CIGI gratefully acknowledges the contribution of the Government of Canada to its endowment Fund.

Le CIGI a été fondé en 2002 par Jim Balsillie, co-chef de la direction de RIM (Research In Motion). Il collabore avec de nombreux partenaires stratégiques et exprime sa reconnaissance du soutien reçu de ceux-ci, notamment de l'appui reçu du gouvernement du Canada et de celui du gouvernement de l'Ontario. Le CIGI exprime sa reconnaissance envers le gouvernement du Canada pour sa contribution à son Fonds de dotation.



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