

# Courier

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The  
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## The Path Forward on Global Summits

INSIDE: New Era of Diplomacy | Evolution of Summitry | Beyond the Photo Op | Rising Powers at the Table





*More Frequent Summits. President Barack Obama takes a question at a NATO Summit news conference in May 2012. World leaders today gather for more face-to-face meetings than ever before, with summits serving as catalysts for decision making in ongoing diplomatic processes. (AP Photo/Kiichiro Sato)*

*Cover. (front row from L to R) UK Prime Minister David Cameron, US President Barack Obama, Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel on their way to a photo call at the G-8 Summit in Camp David, Maryland, on May 19, 2012. (AFP Photo/Bundesregierung/Guido Bergmann)*

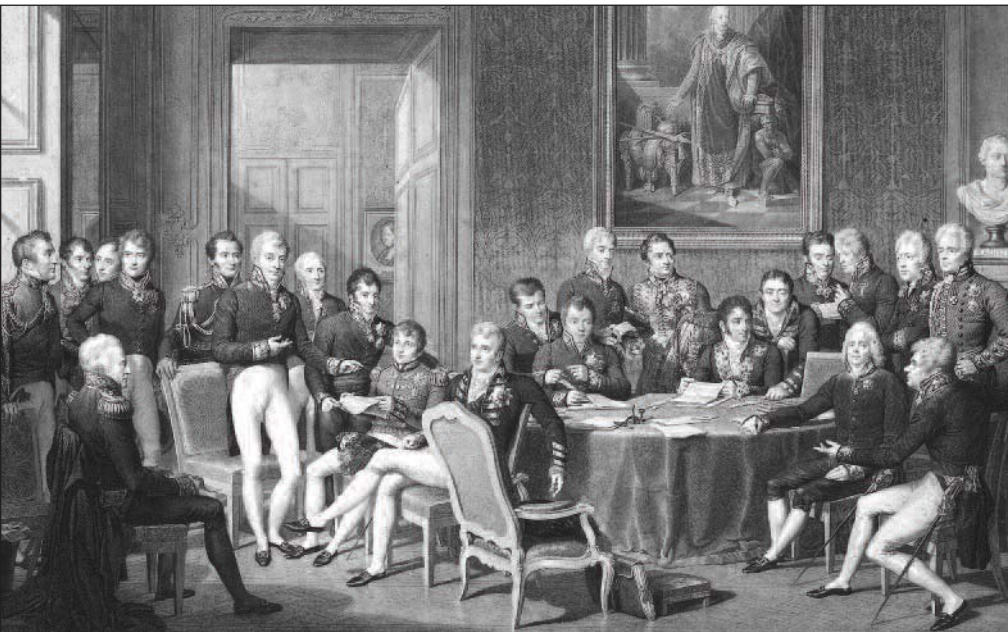
# A New Era in International

## Relations *The proliferation of summits*

### *brings new hope, new challenges to diplomacy*

Ambassadors are the personal representatives of national governments. Images of ambassadors coming together for one-to-one meetings or for gatherings in large treaty conferences have been the icons of international relations for two hundred years. In 1814, when the Congress of Vienna convened to redraw the political face of Europe, the emissaries had

new era of global summitry. The Stanley Foundation, a longtime promoter of finding global solutions to global problems, has taken a keen interest in how this evolution of high-level interactions will change our world. These developments come almost simultaneously with the rise of new world powers eager to claim seats at the highest level of global decision making.



**Speaking for the King.** *The crowned heads of Europe sent their trusted emissaries to the 1814 Congress of Vienna to create the modern rules of diplomacy. Today, heads of state are finding more ways to meet face to face rather than use ambassadors and other proxies.*

to first create the modern rules of diplomacy to govern their meeting, rules that echo down through the ages to our own protocols today.

The United Nations General Assembly is the most visible example of the traditional system of sending ambassadors to exchange messages and negotiate deals. The assembly's opening session, however, is the body's most newsworthy event, when nearly all the heads of state in the world stop by to make a speech and meet with dozens of their peers.

As jet travel and high-speed communications make it ever more possible for world leaders to gather in person rather than send ambassadors, we seem to be entering a

Brazil, India, South Africa, and others represent a growing share of the global economy, yet they are not permanent members of the UN Security Council. Nor, until recently, did they have a real share of power in other institutions. How will their standing in the global power structure mix with the new emphasis on face-to-face interactions among presidents and prime ministers? Will larger numbers around the table make consensus more elusive? Will the involvement of heads of state make it easier to signal and implement global priorities? In this issue of *Courier*, we examine these questions and more.

Our opening feature traces the evolution of summits from the historic Allied gathering at Yalta in 1945, to the BRICS summit of emerging powers, this year's

Mexico G-20 meeting, and beyond. Next, David Shorr addresses the cynicism that too often causes opinion leaders to dismiss summits as mere photo ops.

Yves Tiberghien of the University of British Columbia follows with a look at how the emerging powers can best benefit from the rise of global summits. Finally, please take a look at the resources highlighted on the back page. Videos and other materials are available from our 2012 presummit event just completed in Chicago.

—Keith Porter

Director of Policy and Outreach, The Stanley Foundation





Global Summitry

# The Power of Face-to-Face Engagement *Mere photo opportunity or tip of a global iceberg?*



In 1945, as World War II reached its crescendo in Europe, the three leaders of the Allied forces gathered in Yalta on the Black Sea coast. Transportation of world leaders is always a serious undertaking, but this gathering required the movement of ships and airplanes along a 7,000-mile route through dangerous territory with a frail American president, Franklin D. Roosevelt. In fact, Roosevelt would die just two months after this harrowing journey.

Despite the peril, all involved knew this face-to-face meeting of leaders was crucial to ending the war. For hundreds of years prior, a system of ambassadors, emissaries, couriers, and embassies served as proxies for their respective governments, sending diplomatic communiqués up and down a very formal system of communication. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet leader Josef Stalin bypassed that system because they could—and because they had to.

Today, fast and comfortable jet travel means world leaders have unprecedented opportunities to gather, even on short notice. The old diplomatic system can seem particularly outpaced by modern summits and global-leader gatherings. When President Barack Obama wanted to galvanize world attention and action on securing nuclear weapons-usable material worldwide, he created the Nuclear Security Summit to bring world leaders together on the issue. The 2010 event drew attention, but it also created pressure on world leaders to demonstrate action ahead of the follow-up summit in 2012.

### Rise of the G-20

At the height of the global financial crisis in 2008, then-President George W. Bush called upon the G-20 (then a group of finance ministers from the world's leading and emerging powers) to meet at the heads-of-state level because no other existing forum seemed to have the right mix of countries needed to adequately address the challenge of the global economy.

Despite the rise of the G-20, the G-8, a group of (mostly) Western industrialized democracies, has survived largely because those participating see value in a gathering of like-minded leaders to explore common interests and common approaches to shared problems. Likewise,

*Ending the War. (Top photo) The face-to-face meeting of the three leaders of Allied forces – (from left) British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin – was key to ending World War II.*

*New Faces. (Bottom photo) Emerging powers now have their own forum for personal diplomacy. Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev (left), Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and Chinese President Hu Jintao attend the plenary session of the 2012 BRICS Summit in New Delhi, India. Heads of the five so-called BRICS nations, which also includes Brazil and South Africa, meet regularly. (AP Photo/Saurabh Das)*

the so-called BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) have initiated their own summit series as a way to promote personal relationships and collective problem solving among those emerging economic powers.

At their best, summits can build trust and personal relationships among leaders. They can give leaders a way to signal top priorities to the rest of the world, work out solutions to difficult problems, and build consensus that can be carried to formal, treaty-based institutions like the United Nations.

### Part of a Process

Summits are sometimes criticized for being mere photo opportunities, too short to craft meaningful responses to the challenges of the day. On the other hand, these gatherings of presidents and prime ministers are only part of the modern summit process. Most of the meetings are surrounded by regular sessions of high-level ministers, and the leaders' personal representatives, known as sherpas. Alan Alexandroff at the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs calls this the "iceberg theory" of global governance, in which much more is going on below the surface of a summit's pomp and circumstance.

Mexico, host of this year's G-20 summit, has broadened the ministerial process to include agricultural, labor, trade, and even foreign ministers in meetings designed to give real substance to the heads-of-state conversations. The Mexicans even created a Think 20 for experts and academics, a B-20 for business leaders, and a Y-20 for youth.

While this degree of summit engagement across various levels is made possible by modern methods of transportation and communication, it cannot fully replace the tried-and-true methods of daily diplomacy and global governance. Summits provide a flash of international media attention, and they have the potential to galvanize each member country's domestic bureaucracy around common priorities. Real results, however, come only if leaders can agree to collective solutions and if the urgency of the summit is translated into coordinated action.

—Keith Porter  
Director of Policy and Outreach, The Stanley Foundation

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*Power of Personal Diplomacy. President Barack Obama talks with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the sidelines of the 2009 G-20 Summit in Pittsburgh. Despite cynicism about summitry, there's real value in leaders having face time to solve problems. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)*

Global Summitry

## In Defense of the Photo Op

*Summits are mile markers in ongoing diplomacy; a cynical press needs to recognize that*

There is something about international summits that brings out journalists' jaded side. Just think how often summit coverage includes the term "photo op" as a put-down—with the implication that political leaders have done little more than get their pictures taken.

To some extent, this is built into the situation. It is by definition a rare event to have world leaders convened in the same place. Between the leaders' political clout and overloaded schedules, there is an expectation such gatherings will produce results to justify all the effort. But the longer I have done this kind of work, the more sensitive I am to the fine line between accountability and self-defeating expectations.

To be fair to the world leaders, many issues on their summit docket come with very high "degree of difficulty" ratings, entailing moves that are tough politically and/or substantively. Indeed, summit agendas include some of the most complex and formidable challenges of our time: recovery from recession, rebalancing the global economy, food insecurity, and political transitions in the Middle East.

This is similar to a truism of the American presidency about problems landing on the Oval Office desk due to the failure of other levels of government to resolve them. Consequently, the only way to achieve progress is often through steady, incremental steps. While claiming credit for such a grinding slog can be a

tough case to make to impatient journalists, it is indeed the path forward for some vital issues like climate change or achieving a more stable economic balance between exports and domestic consumption.

### Setting Expectations

Sometimes the nub of the matter is diverging political or policy approaches to the problem. The recent G-8 summit at Camp David, for instance, was subject to especially harsh media commentary, with numerous pundits saying the meeting should not have been held at all. In large part, the cynicism stemmed from the protracted crisis in the Eurozone, which poses a serious threat to the global economy and financial system yet has remained unresolved for more than two years. In a close parallel with US domestic politics, disputes have lingered over government budgets, unemployment, and tight or loose monetary policy.

This still leaves the question of judging the usefulness of summit meetings. What is the right level at which to set expectations, to have a pragmatic view of what is possible, yet also demand accountability? The dilemma is to call on top-level officeholders to be conscientious problem solvers, but not magicians. If progress is bound to be incremental, this fosters a need to understand how the diplomatic and policy slogs are progressing. The effort to continue integrating China into the international system offers two prime examples.

A few years ago, Beijing resisted even discussing a couple of systemic challenges on the multilateral agenda: macroeconomic imbalances and greenhouse gas emissions. In 2009 two summits helped spur Chinese leaders to accept frameworks to deal with both. The G-20's Framework for Strong, Sustainable, and Balanced Growth was adopted at Pittsburgh, launching a process that will require China to reduce its dependence on exports and boost domestic consumer spending. The shift will be gradual and difficult, but it is now reflected in official Chinese economic planning, and Beijing allowed its currency to appreciate by over 4 percent compared with the dollar in 2011.

The key meeting for climate change in 2009 took place in Copenhagen, Denmark. That year China agreed to cut the carbon intensity of its economic growth after years of resisting making such commitments. Chinese leaders also went along with new discussions of a sys-

tem of monitoring and reporting on greenhouse gas emissions. The Copenhagen meeting was famously chaotic—forcing leaders to bridge some of their differences at the 11th hour—but negotiators have continued to work on hashing out crucial details ever since.

### Peaks in a Process

It is part of the role of think-tank experts to help referee the summit-expectations game. The recent G-8 summit that President Barack Obama hosted at Camp David, for instance, raised interesting questions about the G-8's relationship to the Eurozone crisis and the G-20.

As mentioned above, the failure of European leaders to reach a solution exasperated some observers—even to the point that some said the G-8 summit actually made matters worse. According to this reasoning, the summit merely indulges leaders with the appearance of doing more than they are. Yet it is hard to believe that anyone is fooled, especially when media coverage makes pretty clear that the leaders are still avoiding difficult decisions. The question comes down to whether you believe the summit heightened pressures for the politicians to do better or alleviated those pressures.

Likewise, the G-20 summit just a few weeks later—where G-8 leaders would face their counterparts from key emerging powers—could be viewed as a useful source of pressure. Most debate and discussion of these two groups has portrayed them as competing forums. Given how the Eurozone has dominated the conversation in so many multilateral settings, though, it is probably more accurate to view the meetings as events on the calendar of high politics, or part of a rolling diplomatic process.

The world's major global challenges all remain to be solved, of course, and that is the test of 21st century international leadership. It probably would not help, however, to cancel these appointments for world leaders to meet face to face.

—David Shorr  
Program Officer, The Stanley Foundation

*Indeed, summit agendas include some of the most complex and formidable challenges of our time: recovery from recession, rebalancing the global economy, food insecurity, and political transitions in the Middle East.*

### Follow G-20 Leaders on Twitter.

The leaders of the world's 20 largest and emerging economies recently gathered for the G-20 Summit Los Cabos, Mexico. The Stanley Foundation created a list of feeds from most of the leaders on its Twitter account: <http://twitter.com/#!/StanleyFound/g-20-leaders> or scan this QR code with your smart phone QR reader to follow the G-20 leaders on Twitter.







*A Crisis Spurs Action. Greeks gather for a political rally outside the Acropolis in Athens, where the European debt crisis has hit hardest and tested the strength of the European Union. In 2008 the global economic crisis prompted then-US President George W. Bush to call the first-ever leader-level summit of the G-20, giving emerging economies a voice in addressing the problem. (AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis)*

## Rising Powers at the Table

*The onus is on emerging countries to both adapt and lead in an international system they didn't create*

Our global liberal order requires minimal rules and coordination to function. The reciprocity of free trade must be guaranteed, monitored, and enforced. Global finance and global investment also require predictability, monitoring, and coordinated support from states around the world. And the institutional scaffolding that holds the global economy must be

able to adapt, expand, or evolve when faced with new challenges. Post-World War II, such coordination and institutional leadership have been provided through America's relatively benevolent hegemony and through formal institutions (such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization), as well as informal summits such as the G-7/G-8.



Today, the global liberal order faces twin challenges. On the one hand, the number of global challenges is increasing. Global financial markets remain volatile and jittery in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis; climate change, as well as food and energy insecurities, loom on the horizon; and the intensification of globalization has generated domestic inequality and unevenness in development, which erodes support for free trade in many countries. On the other hand, the advanced democracies of North America, Europe, Japan, Korea, Australia, and New Zealand are no longer in full control of the global economy. While their combined share of the global economy was roughly stable and above 60 percent until 2000, it fell to 50 percent in 2011. Over the past decade, a cluster of emerging economies have greatly benefitted from the existing order and risen at a historically unprecedented pace. China, on course to become the largest economy in the world by 2018, is the leader of this group. But it also includes India (still growing at 7 percent in 2012), Brazil, Turkey, South Africa, a few African economies with abundant resources, and, for now, Russia.

In the face of these twin challenges, no task is more pressing for the leaders of large countries than to find a way to repair and expand the global institutional infrastructure that sustains the global economy. In periods of economic difficulties, national leaders must also find ways to coordinate their macroeconomic policies so as to minimize interferences between their varied approaches. Both tasks, however, now require the traditional advanced democracies to find reliable ways of working with emerging powers that play a growing role in the global economy. Without such entrenched dialogue and cooperation between old and new powers, the future of the global economic (and environmental) system could be in danger.

### Challenges to Cooperation

Current leaders in the United States and Europe understand this new requirement. That is why former President George W. Bush called a G-20 leaders summit in Washington, DC, in November 2008 to address the global financial crisis. It was clear that the G-8 format or any other existing institutions would be unable to do the job. But establishing genuine cooperation toward a shared global agenda between traditional and emerging powers is a more difficult task than merely creating the G-20. There are three main challenges to the successful integration of emerging powers, particularly China and India, into global summitry.

First, emerging powers come with historical grievances and still insist on representing the interests of all developing nations. Although this joint representation of interests between, say, China and Chad during UN-sponsored climate negotiations is less defensible (as the exponential Chinese emissions threaten Chad's future), a minimal dis-

ussion on a just global order cannot be avoided. A common sense of global purpose must be fostered after decades of separation, and this will take a bit of time.

Second, emerging powers face a steep learning curve. As several Chinese policy advisers mentioned to me during recent meetings in Beijing, China has just spent nearly three decades trying to adjust to a global order created and managed by others. It is suddenly asked to jointly manage this system and to offer a vision for its future. This major shifting of gears will take some time and requires the training of elites among policymakers, think-tank researchers, and academics who are able to think about global governance and global summitry. In the current absence of such elites, the default position is a prudent one: neither happy about the old system, nor yet able to gauge the implications of certain global positions. Additionally, at least some of them still lack the domestic mechanisms to reconcile the positions of different domestic actors and effectively make decisions on questions of global governance.

Third, emerging powers are particularly wary of other powers trying to use global governance to slow down their rise. They know that time is on their side, and they know that their rise implies a major geopolitical shift. They thus expect the United States and others to use global institutions to put sand in their gears. That limits their willingness to cooperate toward ambitious global actions.

### Opportunities Going Forward

Despite the challenges involved in building cooperation between traditional and emerging powers necessary for the global order, we currently enjoy a good window of opportunity.

So far, emerging powers have benefited from the global liberal order and support innovations like the G-20. They show a general willingness to work with traditional powers on the global order. The relationship remains flexible and open-ended.

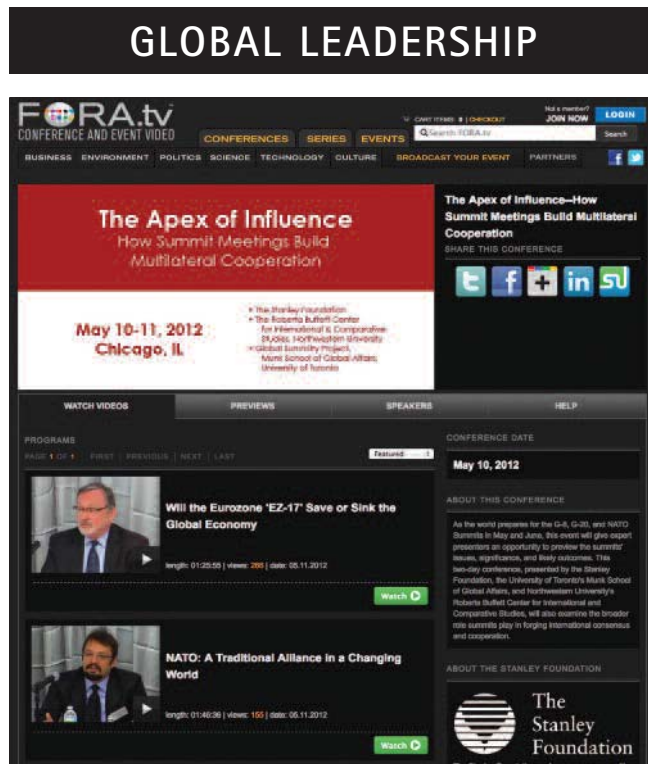
Now is therefore the time for traditional powers such as the United States and Europe to genuinely engage China and other emerging powers through an open-ended global summitry process that focuses on the global public good. Summits such as the G-20 are crucial arenas in which to demonstrate to emerging powers the benefits of cooperation for a common order, through an open give-and-take process that is forward-looking and generates goodwill. The G-20 and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summits are probably the two forums with the most promise. They deserve to be used to their maximum potential.

—Yves Tiberghien  
*Associate Professor, Political Science, University of British Columbia*

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# Stanley Foundation Resources

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## The Apex of Influence: How Summit Meetings Build Multilateral Cooperation

With the G-8, G-20, and NATO summits convening in May and June, this event gave expert presenters an opportunity to preview the summits' issues, significance, and likely outcomes. This two-day conference examined the broader role summits play in forging international consensus and cooperation. May 2012 policy memo.

## Give the G-20 Its Due

By David Shorr and Giovanni Grevi

While there is plenty of room for G-20 nations to raise the level of their diplomatic game, the forum is carving out an important niche in the international system. The key is to understand what that niche is. The proper yardstick for the G-20 is its ability to enhance economic cooperation, build understanding between rising and established powers, better synch up international efforts across separate policy fields, and induce progress in other multilateral forums. May 2012 online article published in *Real Clear World*.

## The Roles of South Africa and the United States for the 21st-Century International Agenda

As part of a broader inquiry on the possibilities for emerging powers to assume greater global leadership, the University of Pretoria Department of Political Science and the Stanley Foundation recently engaged prominent foreign policy experts from the United States and South Africa in a robust roundtable dialogue.

Participants wrestled with mutual suspicions that painted the United States as being heavy-handed and self-serving and South Africa as too lax toward nations that run afoul of international norms. The discussion helped alleviate this mistrust somewhat by delving into South African and American views in greater depth and detail, breaking down stereotypes in the process. April 2012 policy dialogue brief.

## NUCLEAR MATERIAL SECURITY

### An Assessment of the Nuclear Security Centers of Excellence

Dr. Alan Heyes, a senior visiting research fellow at King's College London, makes recommendations to better realize the potential of centers of excellence, those created before and after the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit, to provide technical, scientific, and educational support for developing a robust nuclear security culture, both nationally and internationally. May 2012 policy analysis brief.

### Engaging Whole Community: The Role of Industry and Intergovernmental Organizations in Furthering Nonproliferation Goals and Implementing UNSCR 1540

O'Neil Hamilton, 1540 coordinator for the Caribbean Community, examines the role that Caribbean industry can play in the prevention of proliferation. June 2012 policy analysis brief.

## PREVENTING GENOCIDE

### R2P: The Next Decade

Figures critical to the historical and contemporary evolution of the Responsibility to Protect convened to assess the current state of the principle and consider the evolving global dynamics that will frame, drive, and challenge policy development in the years ahead. This policy memo outlines the critical tasks identified by the discussion as R2P moves from political principle to policy framework in the coming decade. February 2012 policy memo.



## NOW SHOWING

The Now Showing event-in-a-box toolkits offered by the Stanley Foundation are designed to encourage discussion about the most urgent global issues today. They contain everything needed for an easy-to-plan, successful event.



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### Fragile States, Global Consequences

This toolkit features a DVD that helps viewers examine the global challenge of fragile states. It aims to encourage discussion of the growing movement in the international community to find comprehensive ways to promote stronger nations and more effective ways to deal with those that are already on the brink of failure.

### Radioactive Challenge

This toolkit features a DVD that helps viewers examine the challenge of securing vulnerable nuclear materials globally. It aims to encourage discussion of the complexities of the “world’s greatest security challenge,” keeping nuclear material out of the hands of terrorists.

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# Conference Examines Leader-level Problem Solving



*Value of Summitry. President Barack Obama talks to newly elected French President Francois Hollande and Prime Minister Mario Monti of Italy at the G-8 Summit at Camp David in June 2012. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)*

Earlier this year, experts on international politics and policy gathered in Chicago for a conference on “The Apex of Influence—How Summit Meetings Build Multilateral Cooperation.” With the G-8 Summit at Camp David, and Chicago serving as the host of the NATO Summit, it was an ideal setting for a broader and deeper consideration of the role of summit diplomacy.

The meeting was organized by the Stanley Foundation, the Global Summitry Project of University of Toronto’s Munk School of Global Affairs, and the Roberta Buffett Center for International and Comparative Studies at Northwestern University.

Participants examined the contributions of summitry to global problem solving and how the involvement of leaders is often crucial for progress.

## Resource.

A video archive of panels from the two-day event is online at [http://fora.tv/conference/stanley\\_foundation\\_the\\_apex\\_of\\_influence](http://fora.tv/conference/stanley_foundation_the_apex_of_influence) or scan this QR code and go directly to the video Web site.

