tion to say that, insofar as tariff barriers are concerned, the limited goal of trade liberalization has now been achieved.

Once again today, as in the early 1960's, the United States is confronted with an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is made possible by the unexpected success of the Kennedy Round. If freer trade—the objective of U.S. policy for more than three decades—has been substantially accomplished, then it is no longer of purely academic interest to investigate the possibilities of free trade—that is, the abolition of tariffs and other restrictions to trade—as a relevant and practicable goal of U.S. policy and the methods by which it could be realized. In other words, owing to the six postwar GATT rounds of tariff reductions, the remaining duties on a very broad range of products are now low enough to envisage abolishing tariffs completely on most or all of these commodities in the next negotiation. True, there are certain industries, such as textiles, shoes, and other consumer goods, as well as agriculture, which continue to enjoy a high degree of protection and where the prospects for free trade are still remote. But, a large enough proportion of internationally significant commodities are already free of tariffs or within striking distance of that situation to make free trade a relevant goal of U.S. policy for the decade or so that lies ahead.

This possibility is strengthened by the challenge of the new period in world politics that began during the mid-1960's.[1] The two preceding postwar decades were an era of major structural changes in the international system made necessary and possible by the deep dislocations caused by World War II. Chief among these postwar changes were the great decolonization movement that brought into existence 60-odd new nations, the clear-cut global United States-Soviet confrontation of the cold war, and the rise of Communist China. In turn, World War II and these and other subsequent developments provided both the incentive and the opportunity for such unprecedented acts of creative restructuring as the establishment of the United Nations and many other international political and economic organizations, the Marshall plan and the process of European unification, NATO and other mutual defense pacts, and the large-scale programs of financial and technical assistance to Asian, African, and Latin American countries. If it had produced an effectively integrated Atlantic Community willing and able to protect and help its allies and friends in all parts of the world, the "grand design" for an Atlantic partnership would have been the culmination of the postwar process of international restructuring.

However, in the course of the 1960's, it gradually became evident that the intensity and clear-cut global dichotomy of the cold war was being diffused and confused by fundamental changes on both sides: the growing rivalry between the Soviet Union and China, the gradual loosening of Soviet control over the East European countries and their increasing independence in both domestic and foreign policy, the waning revolutionary fervor of Soviet communism and its concomitant waxing concern with fostering Russian prosperity; and, on the Western side, the parallel decline in U.S. influence over its NATO allies, the new "isolationism" in West European attitudes, and the marked

[1] For a fuller analysis of the characteristics of the new period and their implications for U.S. policy, see Theodore Geiger, "The Ending of an Era in Atlantic Policy," in the Atlantic Community Quarterly, vol. 5, No. 1, spring 1967, pp. 87–98.