

lems now being wrestled with in more limited groups such as international commodity study groups within the purview of the general forum and its public process.

In addition, it should probably be open to a government to put forward for consideration an action which it contemplates but has not yet taken; this technique might appeal in cases where foreign government cooperation was particularly valuable for insuring the success of the action.

RULES AND PROCEDURES

The intergovernmental conversation would deal primarily with the economic effects of a government action. It would cover all significant effects—domestic and foreign, direct and indirect, concentrated and diffused, immediate and longer term, costs and gains. It would run to specifics. As far as possible, it would be in quantitative terms—estimating or evaluating even when examining doctrinaire allegations of effect. How much does an action change prices, costs, profits, production, consumption? Who is affected adversely, who beneficially, when, and to what degree? What is the effect on the growth of the world production process—on innovation—on adjustment to current changes in the economic environment? The format of discussion of these questions would not be one of bargaining between governments. It would be a search for facts on which to base judgments. Conflicts of interest would, of course, be involved; but a participant government would not be called on to take a position as between a national (say, producer) interest that might be helped by an action and another national (say, transportation or consumer) interest that might be injured. Each would be assessed separately; and the presentation of this combination of assessments—for all interests, wherever found, which are significantly affected by the action—would be the entire object of the examination. Disagreements would be reported—and quantified as far as possible; they would relate to facts, not to recommendations for action—although perhaps facts about alternative possible actions might be presented. In form, however, the process would not be of an adversary nature. Neither would it be reciprocal except in the sense that all countries would participate—permitting multilateral intergovernmental examination of their actions which affect trade—and each would join in the discussion of the effects of the actions of the other countries. The examination would involve no negotiating about the status or appropriateness of the different acts—merely a series of findings about the separate economic effects of each. The interrelationships would be brought out as revealed through the effects.

The examination would probably take on some of the constructive qualities of many current nonadversary intergovernmental economic discussions, e.g., the GATT consultations on balance-of-payment restrictions and development program implications, of some of the OECD “confrontations,” and commodity study groups, and of many other current discussions. There would, however, be two main differences from most of these intergovernmental discussions, stemming from points of emphasis. In the *first* place, though deriving its *raison d'être* from trade, the examination would not be directly associated with a multilaterally accepted code of trade rules or principles of fair dealing in trade matters. The only really basic principle of the