rounds held at Geneva, Annecy and Torquay between 1947 and 1951, at which the weighted average level of *all* U.S. duties was reduced by over 50 percent, item-by-item discussions frequently served to hold the conferences together while governments were deadlocked over a few, unusually difficult concession items. On the other side, of course, one can argue that cutting all tariffs by the same percentage would prevent protectionist selectivity; theoretically, one can pursue a protectionist goal while lowering many duties and not raising any. Expressed from the interest-conflict point of view, getting rid of trade barriers dramatically *en bloc* would better focus the consumer interest and the exporter interest in reduced protection and would make it difficult for powerful producer interests to keep just those tariffs and other barriers which restrain their foreign competition at the expense of the general public. Experience suggests, however, that this interest balancing works out relatively poorly. It is usually the most powerful interests which find it easiest to have their protective barriers excepted from sweeping reductions. They can best persuade officials and the public of the logic of their particular cases for exception from a broad formula. Since no two trade barriers have quantitatively identical effects according to formula, it is only when all of the effects of government action in each specific competitive situation are considered, item by item, that the officials will understand and face the full implications of a decision. For the same reason, public surveillance of trade barrier reduction can be focused intelligently only when the specific effects of each barrier on costs, prices, production, profits, and the like are brought out in an open discussion process—item by item—as here proposed. And the need for item-by-item consideration is becoming even greater because general reduction formulas are applicable effectively only to tariffs and certain quotas—not to most other kinds of barriers; yet the latter are becoming very important. The dream of a policy which can wipe out most trade intervention in sweeping strokes is not geared to modern realities.

INSTITUTIONALIZED ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE TRADE FIELD

The proposed mechanism, therefore, would attack the problem by shifting trade policy emphasis to the responsibility governments assume in the specific instances when they choose to intervene—not necessarily the responsibility they intend to assume but that which, because of the real effects of their intervention, they cannot in the end evade. Under present U.S. foreign trade policy, as represented in legislation and program, emphasis is on the portion of the tariff or other barrier which it is proposed to get rid of. The portion maintained (and the present program calls for some substantial portion to be maintained in almost every case) is presumably left to unilateral manipulation without direct formal concern for the interests of other countries (and often, as these things work out in the United States at least, with rather less than enough concern for even the domestic general public interest —as opposed to that of some special interests). Yet it is the intervention maintained in force and effect which affects international trade.

Under the program here proposed, each specific act of trade intervention which a government maintains would be publicly declared to be carried out for a specified public purpose. In the consultation with other governments and the reconsideration, discussion would inevitably