

run to facts relevant to that purpose—how to define it in trade terms, what costs to other objectives must be incurred to satisfy it, what measures would cost least, etc. Many elements of such a process, including the development of criteria, working rules and a tradition of reasonableness, have already emerged in the GATT and in other forums.

With agreement to schedule the elimination of all intervention decided not to be in the net national public interest, the process would take on a new importance. There would be discussion of the magnitudes and duration of the damage to the protected interests and of the service to the public interest. The exchange of information on this and other relevant questions, properly conducted, would serve to narrow differences and even to stimulate action to alleviate unnecessary damage to one another's interests. The more specific the discussion, the greater the possibility of its having such effects. Agreement would rarely be complete, but areas of difference would fall within more and more reasonable "tolerance points." With time and public familiarity, the process should become increasingly effective in achieving a pattern of trade freedom, with acceptable and rational modification where desirable for the effectiveness of the world economy or other publicly decided purposes.

Where reconsideration by one country led to decisions conditional on actions by other countries, there would tend to emerge multilateral discussion going beyond the examination of effects and into policy arrangements—whether to withdraw intervention or to coordinate it. These discussions—essentially product discussions—would usually be carried on in separate forums or subforums—as has already happened for a number of primary products. But under the proposed mechanism, such discussions would have to be carried on consistently with, and responsively to, the course of discussion in the principal trade-intervention forum: They would have to be fully public and would have to consider and investigate full facts. Where, as in wheat and other grains, the decision of governments to intervene in ways affecting foreign trade is widespread and economically almost irrevocable, a continuing forum for intergovernmental program agreement will be required. However, not very many products will both be characterized by market inadequacy and be sufficiently basic to be handled in this way. For those which are so handled, there will never (or hardly ever) be sufficiently comprehensive agreement for these "commodity" forums to be complete or adequate—even within their own product economies, to say nothing of their interrelationships with other parts of the world economy. Therefore, even for such permanent intervention cases as wheat, much of the subject matter will be dealt with in the principal conversations, and this perspective might lead to modified positions in the commodity discussions.

LOCUS OF THE CONVERSATIONS

The question arises as to the "locus" of the proposed intergovernmental conversations in relation to the many organizations and arrangements for intergovernmental trade discussion already in existence. No effort is made in this paper to give a preferred answer to that question. But the proposed review and coordination would be closely related to a number of fields of foreign economic policy other