

than trade. It would affect the areas of jurisdiction of almost all intergovernmental economic organizations. The secretariats of a number of them would have an important interest in its success. It might be best to have them somehow operate jointly in servicing the proposed conversations. Finally, the proposal would be most constructive if participation were made universal in principle. Therefore, the forum would have to be such as to facilitate the inclusion of any interested country.

The actions whose effects were examined would be of all kinds. At one extreme might be a simple trade barrier with comparatively little to examine beyond the cost, to his compatriots and foreigners, of the support of an inefficient producer. At the other extreme might be an interrelated pattern of costly government subsidies and restrictions such as that designed to govern the world's grain supply and consumption. The institutional framework used should be such as to give the various related current intergovernmental conversations (which would presumably remain in the forums where they are now going on—except as the examination might develop reasons for changing them) significance in terms of representative surveillance of the growth of a dynamic world economy. In this way, the modification of action taken for interests narrowly conceived can be weighted toward the general interest, even though the narrow interests inevitably are the more acutely and urgently recognizable in the details of a particular examination.

RELATION TO PRESENT PROGRAM

The question of whether the proposed policy approach is desirable has often been obscured by the question of "how to get there from here"—and by doubt that it could be done. This is in part the mechanism aspect of the question, whether governments will reduce intervention if they are not given something in return. The GATT is a contract—the end product of a bargain. The threat of retaliation is the force which makes governments honor their GATT undertakings; the protectionist values and objectives in the bargaining concept dominate thinking. If agreement was reached on a new technique (discuss, reconsider and then either eliminate or coordinate) directed toward a new value objective (the public interest conceived as being not necessarily national in its extension but often, in economic matters, shared internationally), would not the GATT fall apart? Would not barriers rise? It must be evident that, if the rethinking of fundamentals that led to this proposal is correct, then questions of this type must be taken as mechanical problems to be worked out—not as arguments for abandoning the proposal.

On a more deliberate look in a wider perspective, however, they will be seen to reflect unjustified fears. The program here suggested as one way of carrying out the proposed policy approach should have a strengthening effect on the GATT. There would probably be no more "rounds" as such (for which fact alone there might be much quiet thanksgiving). However, discussions of trade intervention would not decrease. They would be continuous and much more public. The danger of "unraveling" the GATT might, therefore, be taken care of more effectively than it now is. Barriers would have to be justified publicly as good in their own right—not as bargaining power to use in dealing