

best, the function of "government" is performed by a concert of distinct "sovereign" units, responsible to separate electorates. The "sovereigns" are usually at odds over some aspects of that international trade which evidences the economic cooperation of their electorates. There is little or no formal institutionalized cooperation on an authoritative basis. The various intergovernmental economic organizations which have been set up to pioneer ways of improving this concert of sovereigns are limited because they must depend, or must appear to depend, entirely on persuasion among their component governments.

The governments, whether acting separately, in organizations, or in direct cooperation, are "narrower" and less responsible than they are in domestic matters. It is almost exclusively the executive branches of the various National Governments which participate in the international economic governing. Hence, it is extraordinarily difficult, on the intergovernmental plane, for any economic interests which are not adequately weighed in executive decisions to find corrective expression through legislative, judicial, or "commission" processes. The dominance of the executive branch in these matters may be an inescapable part of our Nation-State system and certainly it is not here proposed to change it.

However, a trade policy proposal must take account of the fact that the executive branches have tended to exercise in a negative sense their power to govern the meshing of their national economic activity in a world industrial production mechanism. They have not reached a common ideological understanding, unless one counts their tongue-in-cheek GATT commitment to gradually cease using their power to govern in the trade field. Their concerting of action is given timid and apologetic publicity. The trade-barrier-reduction ideology has been associated in executive branches—certainly in the U.S. executive—with a certain fear and distrust of electorates. The opinion is widely held in governments that all people are protectionist as concerns their own interests; therefore, as we have seen in analyzing the bargaining technique, specific trade-barrier-reduction moves are given a protectionist format—and they are then carried out secretly. The great marshalings of public support have been based on generalities like freedom of trade, comparative advantage, or across-the-board reductions.

When it comes to deciding on the use of the power of the executive to affect specific trade transactions, however, the great bulk of it is done in closed meetings without prior public debate or subsequent detailed discussion of specific anticipated effects.⁷ In these circumstances, the executive acts inadequately and often—against their expressed purpose—protectively. They keep the electorate at arm's length, as it were, and preserve the trade programs in principle, but do not use the programs very much for fear the specific effects would alienate public support. The opportunity is not often taken to marshal public opinion behind decisions in favor of the greater, and more public specific interest—with compensation where justified to the lesser and more private specific interest.

⁷ In escape-clause cases, where damage is alleged to have been done to a domestic interest, there is an *ex post facto* discussion of effect. This will presumably be more frequent under the adjustment assistance provisions of the Trade Expansion Act.