

Mr. McNEILL. You are talking strictly about exports?

Representative RUMSFELD. Yes.

Mr. McNEILL. We looked at this quite carefully back in 1961-62, when Britain was negotiating access into the Common Market, and at that time were not able to come up with any judgments that we would be severely affected in terms of the drop in our exports to the United Kingdom.

Representative RUMSFELD. Turning to the other possibility, let's assume that the reasons why some countries are not very eager to have Great Britain in the Common Market aren't economic but are political, and they can't be worked out, and Britain doesn't go in. What is your Department's attitude on the possibility of creating a free trade area composed of some of the more developed countries, not just in the Atlantic area but possibly also Japan and others?

Mr. TROWBRIDGE. Are you suggesting a regional across-the-Atlantic free trade area kind of relationship?

Representative RUMSFELD. That is one possibility. However, ignoring Japan would be difficult, so, as I say, not just in the Atlantic but beyond.

Mr. TROWBRIDGE. Well, our approach to this, I think, historically has been the hope that multilateral tariff negotiations, such as the Kennedy Round, are going to be a lot more advantageous than the proliferation of regional trading blocks and preferential treatment between them. Mr. McNeill may want to add something to that?

Mr. McNEILL. If I may, Congressman, digress a little bit on the foreign policy objective of the United States in Europe, which basically is to bring together, as I understand the policy, the French and the German people, in a situation such as now exists of peace. Our postwar policy has been aimed toward that end.

Representative RUMSFELD. I wasn't asking you a foreign policy question.

Mr. McNEILL. I understand. I want to start there and then go to the answer.

Representative RUMSFELD. My question is as to the economic impact.

Mr. McNEILL. You would be negotiating for a free trade area, essentially, I suppose, for an economic purpose, which is what you have in mind. But the political implications of that would be quite serious, because it would involve turning somewhat away from Europe toward something else as the heart of Atlantic policy. By Europe I mean Common Market Europe, and that, I think, would be a very serious step that would have to be considered by the administration in any consideration of a free trade proposal.

Representative RUMSFELD. I am sure it would be. My time is up. I would like to ask one last question if I may?

Chairman PROXMIRE. You have unanimous consent. Go ahead, sir.

Representative RUMSFELD. This concerns the proposals that have been made recently to study the effect of the possible transition to the metric system. It is my recollection that the proposals didn't pass the Congress in the last session. Is the Department planning to pursue that this year? Will there be a message on that subject or a recommendation from the Department, do you know offhand?

Mr. TROWBRIDGE. Congressman, I am searching my memory as to where that does stand. I know that we were very active on that question in the last session.