

resisted on principle in democracies because the public does not know what it hides – indeed, it invites the inference that it shelters from scrutiny power broking that trades off interests of some against benefits for others without adequate compensation.<sup>22</sup> The reality is, of course, that genuine power broking is rarely done in formal terms;<sup>23</sup> accordingly, if secrecy of formal proceedings shields anything from public awareness, it is most likely the lame arguments, lackadaisical involvement, long-windedness and rhetorical posturing that all too often are inflicted on those engaged in international discussions.

More fundamentally, secrecy in negotiations and administration undermines the very possibility of full accountability and, in a not unrelated matter, tends to reverse the benefits that flow from consultations – indeed, it may well give rise to cynicism as to whether consultation is to inform public policy or is simply undertaken to mollify public opinion. Accordingly, allowing more sunshine into the WTO would not only be good for the organization itself but would also remove some of the fuel that feeds the public demonstrations against it.

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<sup>22</sup> This point also can be made in respect of the relationships amongst the members of the WTO itself, as was shown at Seattle by the adverse reaction to the proposal that emerged from the "green room" process by those WTO members not part of the group (the "green room" process consists of an informal consultative group within the WTO that tries to forge the basis for compromise amongst the larger trading economies as a precursor to proposals being put to the full membership). This issue is dubbed "I-transparency," or internal transparency in Geneva jargon, to distinguish it from "E-transparency," or external transparency, which is vis-à-vis non-members. For a discussion of the I-transparency issue, see S. Ostry, "The Uruguay Round North-South Grand Bargain: Implications for Future Negotiations," *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> For example, the forward movement in the Uruguay Round negotiations was to an important extent due to discussions in various small groups named after the restaurants in which they met, a point noted ruefully by those who ate their way through the Uruguay Round and have the waistlines to prove it. Nor, might it be said, is there anything untoward in this. Informal processes are no more foreign to intergovernmental affairs than golf-course deals are to business or brown-bag lunch discussions to CSO opinion generation.