

The purpose of surveillance would be to exert peer group pressure, at the senior official and Ministerial levels, for policy adjustment and adaptation. It would do this by highlighting the impact of trade-related policies on the country's domestic performance, on other countries' trade opportunities, and on the system as a whole.

Peer group pressure may seem a weak reed to cope with the forces for structural change in the world trading system but, in effect, it is a counterpart of multilateral surveillance in the Fund or the OECD or the G7. There is no neat set of rules which may be found to guarantee "automaticity" in any of these places. And just as the breakdown of the post-war consensus macro paradigm of how the macro economy works has made macro policy coordination more difficult since the 1970's so, today, the new "strategic trade policy" is providing a theoretical rationale for sophisticated forms of protectionism. This weakening of the consensus micro paradigm will doubtlessly make trade policy discussion more ambivalent and inconclusive -- but also much more realistic than the stirring trade pledges of yesteryear.