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ON THE STUDY OF GOVERNMENT*

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As the American Political Science Association nears the half century mark of its existence it seems appropriate to consider the broad significance of a professional group devoted to the study of government. Political science as a subject of systematic inquiry started with Aristotle but as a profession it has won its greatest recognition in the United States and within our generation. One fact is clear: no other country in the world today has so large, so well-trained, so competent a profession dedicated to the teaching and analysis of government.

Whatever the current climate of opinion may be, these are the men and women who, from day to day in classroom and study, must explain in lectures and in writing the nature of political systems, foreign and domestic. This profession, which has flourished so greatly in the last fifty years, is now a part of our national strength: it is the core of that broad and continuing study of government and thoughtful concern with politics vital to the successful operation of free institutions. I want to tell you why I think the study of governmental matters and a wider understanding of political problems has a fresh urgency for us as a nation and the bearing this in turn has on the development of political science as a discipline.

I

To study is to apply intellect. To apply intellect is to give thought free rein. This is obviously dangerous—it particularly endangers clichés, stereotypes, and folk wisdom—such as where there is smoke there must be fire—an obvious non sequitur to anyone who has tried to burn damp autumn leaves or to read dull freshman themes!

Folk wisdom is not enough nor can experience alone be relied upon for political guidance. Native wit and leisurely whittling will not reduce today's political problems to handy manageable size.

The intimate politics of the cracker barrel have been replaced by the grim politics of the atomic pile. Common sense, energy, and good will

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are still needed but new complexities call for new skills and fresh knowledge.

Today, basic questions of national destiny and of world stability are bound up with phenomena quite beyond the day-to-day experience of most citizens. A rational response and a responsible attitude in such a situation can best come as the consequence of thought applied to knowledge. As government extends to matters far beyond the familiarity gained through participation, or direct observation, the conscious effort at understanding—that is to say, the study—of government becomes vitally important.

Such an attitude implies that a suspended judgment is called for on a great many issues. It demands an adult, mature approach to matters that are commonly treated with emotional indulgence of partisan feelings. It belies those who seek national security in secrecy even on those matters better known to our enemies than to the public and it calls for giving citizens whatever information is basic for making sound governmental decisions.

This attitude toward the realm of the political is easier to describe than achieve. It is not enough that self-government reflect the wishes of the governed, however shortsighted or selfish be these demands. We cannot rest content with government that is merely representative, as if representation in itself were the ultimate goal. Self-government must be effective government if it is to be adequate to its present-day responsibilities. Self-government is not simply a process of the wish fulfillment of articulate publics. It is the adjustment of many wills, *not only* to each other and among competing groups but also to such hard facts as the productive capacity of the country, our stage of technological advance, the limits of economic strength, the demands of national security, and the policies of our allies. Intelligent and responsible public reactions are called for both to face the threats of aggressive enemies and to hold the friendship of other nations.

Will our political skills and knowledge keep pace with the demands for orderly adjustment of human relationships that are imposed by advancing technology and the demands for responsible leadership imposed by our world position?

Such questions go far far beyond partisan competition where the objective is to throw the rascals out. Moreover, technological advance and increased productivity as victories of mind and management can be brought to nought by governmental failure. We must understand our politics and succeed governmentally because the final pay-off today and for the future is in terms of effective political behavior.

The place obviously to start is with a more realistic understanding of our own political system, our political goals, assumptions, and routines. Should we acquire the habit of now and again analyzing our national objectives—could we picture for ourselves such strivings as a political process—we might gain that sense of detachment which is the beginning of statecraft.

There are those few who talk as though the intricacies of politics and self-government did not demand special study. They seem to regard government as a sub-division of industry placed somewhere between public relations and cost accounting; or that corner of an otherwise cleanly laboratory where the drains are clogged and the blowers rattle.

Turning from those who already know the answers, we encounter others who don't even know the relevant questions to ask. Many such are among the traditional voters following to the polls the partisan tracks of their grandfathers: and often serving to sustain congressional committee chairmen capable of keeping legislation in rigid deep-freeze for prolonged periods.

And then there are those who care neither for questions nor answers (save perhaps on give-away programs). Little is known precisely of these citizens—our sounding devices report their existence as vast layers of protein, submerged in varying depths of inertia. They are said to be the habitual prey of bigger fish.

In any event, I think that most of us see with clarity today that our political problems are not to be disposed of by miracles of leadership. We are all in the same boat and buffeted by the same world storms. To suggest, as some do, that our governmental craft should be exchanged for an improved model more responsive to the helm is beside the point. Our hope must lie in better seamanship. Furthermore, riding today's rough waters offers little occasion for that type of complacency called partisan recrimination: while one party mans the oars the other must bail—too breathless to murmur "I told you so."

We turn with renewed faith to such fundamentals of self-government as:

Respect for fact and knowledge as the basis of opinion;

Tolerance in order to give scope to the interplay of viewpoints;

A rational sense of conviction that leads the way to decision;

Loyalty to those processes of government that guard our basic values;

And as guides for action—liberty, justice, truth, and that attitude of mind suggested by the words compassion, charity, and humility.

These fundamentals of self-government are based on a high faith in our fellow man—on mutual trust. We are ready to accept the fallibility

of human reactions because, as Americans, we believe that there is no other form of rule more satisfactory than self-government. The implications of our political faith are, as Judge Learned Hand has so wisely said, "among the most unwelcome that men are called upon to accept. They are that truth is attainable only by trial and error, and a readiness ever to re-examine and reappraise. That does violence to our deepest animal bent, which demands some immediate and positive response to any emergency. Doubt and scrutiny, the most serviceable of man's tools, were the last that he acquired. He has never quite reconciled himself to their use; they are always repellent and painful."

II

In view of the emphasis in this introductory statement upon the heightened importance for all of the study and understanding of government—of the application of mind to politics—I would like next to consider more closely the teaching of political science, the place of research, and the development of governmental studies from the standpoint of both the nation and our profession.

The study of government must proceed from the values that make the Republic secure and free. Teaching enlightened by these values has never been more meaningful. Because the constant study of government is integral to the successful operation of our institutions, the teaching of political science is a high calling and one that remains squarely within the tradition of liberal education. Entry upon the field opens the way to a rich literature or, to put it another way, fosters acquaintance out of the past with men of wisdom, of learning, of courage, and also at times of style and wit. Few fields of knowledge, indeed, can draw upon such a range of talent reflecting both high aspiration and worldly shrewdness.

To this historic store of literary, philosophic, and juridical thought, join the more recent systematic and descriptive studies of government and politics and add, further, the chance to gain some understanding of current problems, and the ever-increasing attractiveness of political science as a field of study is readily seen.

Every teacher of this subject cannot but convey to his students a sense of his own convictions. The highest form of teaching is that in which the teacher performs as a scholar and shares with his juniors in learning his own excitement and sense of integrity in the pursuit of knowledge. I see no need on the teacher's part to proselitize for citizenship or indoctrinate democracy. I think rather, of Chaucer's scholar, of whom it was enough to say—

> And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.

The vitality and substance of what is taught and what is to be learned rests in the constant refreshment of the subject matter. Here, research is of the essence, not only to keep vivid and meaningful the materials of teaching but also to keep the teacher alert and confident. The teacher may become a sage to his students and an unchallenged authority in his classroom; as a research scholar, he finds himself competing with fellow-specialists. Such discipline is the best safeguard against smugness. The teacher who limits his activities to the classroom risks becoming a pundit in a puddle. In his research pursuits, he must test his strength in swifter waters and with mature competitors. If there were no other reasons, research could be well justified as a device for keeping a teacher on his mettle and subjecting him to the judgment of his fellow specialists.

By and large, as this group knows so well, time for research must be found in the intervals of heavy teaching loads. Of necessity, research often is an avocation rather than a central preoccupation. From the standpoint of research careers, the time for men devoting their attention to the analysis of governmental problems contrasts very unfavorably indeed with the man-hours available for market research in business and advertising firms or investment research in brokerage houses, or for the study of production and improved technology in industry. There must be a wider public recognition that research into governmental affairs is too important to remain a marginal activity.

Big democracy needs to know itself. Big business, big labor, and big agriculture all find large-scale, systematic data-collection and analysis too useful to do without. The conduct of large-scale operations calls for large-scale fact-gathering and fact-analysis.

In terms of hard, statistical data, we know much more about hog production than voting behavior; or soil conservation than money in elections. Much more effort is given to compiling indices to determine the cost of living than to following trends of opinion on world affairs. When we stop to consider the range and variety of political data that could be gathered by using much the same method of collection applied to industrial, agricultural, and similar affairs, we realize that the potentialities for studying political phenomena have scarcely been scratched. It may seem paradoxical that governmental statistics have been an orphan child in the Census Bureau and highly questionable from the standpoint of Congress but such indices lack, of course, the firm and direct parental support accorded, for example, the census of manufactures. (And parents have their problems, too!)

Once we go beyond the records made available, so to speak, as a by-product of the governmental process, the raw materials suitable for

basic research are more difficult to come by. An excellent illustration of the kind of reporting best done upon the initiative of political scientists themselves is the study of delegations to our national party conventions. This effort, which was carried on under the auspices of this Association and which has won the collaboration of so many members throughout the United States, demonstrates what political scientists can do for themselves. We have in this Association a device, ready and at hand, that could become a highly significant method of reporting and communication. Another illustration is the Inter-University Case Program. Here is a cooperative method for gathering fresh teaching materials and data suggestive of new leads and new insights.

While political scientists have devised ways and means of adding to the basic information that is needed for research into governmental processes, the task is so large that support from official agencies and from private foundations is essential. Recent experience indicates that this support will often be granted when specific plans are drawn up and concrete projects offered for consideration. The problems of present-day government call for more systematic, better-supported, and larger-scale fact-gathering if political scientists are to do their jobs effectively and if citizens are to understand the nature of their political institutions.

From where we stand at the present moment, granting the importance of more and better data and accepting the diversity of the field, what are the directions for development? In terms of both research strategy and for practical usefulness, I think a strong case can be made for greater attention to a comparative approach across the wide range of political science—comparative public law, comparative political philosophy, comparative political institutions and governmental systems, comparative political behavior whether of individuals or societies.

We have found, in trying to explain our political institutions to peoples in other countries, that there is not nearly enough in the literature of American government and democracy that is suitable for export. Can it be that, in the past, we have been so much concerned with piecemeal reports or fragmented studies of our own system that we have missed analyzing as fully as we should the larger picture—the factors that have made this country so relatively strong, productive, and free? We have urged free elections upon other nations without, apparently, a full awareness on our side or theirs of all the component social, economic, and political factors that enter into responsible government. We are beginning to realize the integral nature of industrial structure, tax policy, class mobility, educational opportunity, and technological

change. Motivations toward work, toward investment and consumption, toward savings and private philanthropy, are all part of the matrix of a workable, competitive, political system.

In our relations with the rest of the world, we are fully mindful of the proximity created by modern means of transportation. Such means are well suited to the exchange of persons, and the mass media of communication are ideally suited to propaganda. We tend to overlook or minimize the fact that readier physical access merely aggravates the cultural differences that separate us. Perhaps, also, in comparative studies, the time dimension could be given more attention than it has heretofore. Here again, people essentially unchanged in culture since the Middle Ages are now expected to do business with nations formed in the forces of the Industrial Revolution.

Careful studies that dealt comparatively with the cultures and ideologies, the historical development, and the whole complex of forces that seek final expression politically would lead not only to a better understanding of the countries of the world with which we must deal but should likewise enable us to understand ourselves better. Moreover, our own federal system provides unusual scope for the study of comparative politics, election behavior, lawmaking, and the administrative and judicial process. Problems of urbanism, comparatively approached, are more stimulating and suggestive. Here is a direction for growth which could put to use existing skills and available resources without waiting upon revolutionary advances in systematic methodology. The practical necessity of a common frame of reference becomes immediately obvious if comparisons are to be made at all. There must be some conception of a unit of comparison, and hence some thought to the process that the units create. This, in itself, prompts the search for uniformities. When situations are analyzed comparatively, field work becomes necessary, the imagination is enlarged by contact with new situations, and facile solutions are more readily seen as superficial.

To urge comparative study and field work, or to call for more fact-gathering, more case-collecting, more systematic recording, more statistical compilation, or to argue for more opportunities and careers for research scholars, without at the same time recognizing the need for better techniques of analysis would mark no genuine advance. Improved methods of research must be a continuing concern.

Research, as unbridled empiricism, offers little beyond the practical utility that specific findings may have for an immediate purpose. The story of the Tower of Babel takes on new meaning if we think of those ancient builders as rank empiricists—diligent, aspiring, but doomed to

failure by the conception of their task and the ensuing confusion of their tongues. There must be theoretical work that guides the analyst to seeking hypotheses for verification or for discard. And, between the data-gathering and the concept-building, there must be rigorous attention to methodology. In a word, I think we will all welcome the increased awareness there seems to be today among political scientists of the importance of theory if research is to be significant and its findings are to be cumulative. In this context I do not conceive of theory as philosophy: as the ordering of values in order to provide a rational justification of political power, but rather theory as a conceptual scheme for the analysis and ordering of empirical data on political behavior. "By a theorist," as Whitehead writes, "I do not mean a man who is up in the clouds, but a man whose motive for thought is the desire to formulate correctly the rules according to which events occur."

I realize that theory of a systematic and analytical character does not arise as a consequence of exhortation. There is ground, however, for real hope in finding within this Association today, especially among younger political scientists, an alertness to theory, not as an overarching system, but rather for disclosing focal points where empirical findings suggest uniformities and offer a basis for generalization. Encouraging, also, is their impatience to push forward with jobs of concrete research, their readiness to talk shop, and to compare notes concerning better methods of inquiry. There is, I think, less solemn disputation about science with a big "S" and less drawing of discouraging comparisons between political science and the stereotypes held by laymen as to what the natural sciences are supposed to be. There is, rather, an attitude of mind that James Conant has so well described as "scientific." "Science," he writes, "is a dynamic undertaking directed to lowering the degree of the empiricism involved in solving problems; or, if you prefer, science is a process of fabricating a web of interconnected concepts and conceptual schemes arising from experiments and observations and fruitful of further experiments and observations" (*Modern Science and Modern Man* [New York, 1952], p. 62).

As thinking advances along these lines, we may begin to see the possibility of an economy of inquiry developing for the guidance of empirical work. A conceptual scheme, by its nature, points to certain questions as crucial and thereby offers standards of relevance. All this means a more devoted effort to formulate hypotheses, to order evidence, to pose alternatives, rather than defend positions or advocate solutions. We find more attention given to analysis and less to prescription or recommendations on the basis of inadequate evidence. The objective becomes

not the assertion of universal laws or the establishment of basic principles but, rather, the verification of propositions presented with sufficient accompanying data so that other investigators may, if they choose, make comparable inquiries and reject, affirm, or modify the original propositions. It is such an attitude of mind that prepares the ground for investigators to achieve major break-throughs: this happens as empirical findings become cumulative and open the way to fresh theoretical formulations.

This concern with political analysis I find encouraging and significant. But it is, admittedly, a trend rather than an accomplishment, an attitude of mind rather than a system. The concern here is with a level of analysis, not as deep as the well of metaphysics, nor as wide as the church door of morals. It is one corner in the large and busy field of governmental studies where the frequenters, it is assumed, have already worked out for themselves elsewhere some reasonably satisfactory personal philosophy of life and of politics. They have their political loyalties and policy preferences, but they choose not to pursue these ends in this particular corner. Like any good club, it does not undertake to preempt the ties of family, church, or country.

The systematic analysis of political behavior and political processes is a significant growing edge of knowledge for our field. But it is better approached with an air of curiosity about politics than a desire to improve. It is a subject for the teasing needle rather than the tuning fork.

Political philosophy will continue to deal with ultimate aspects of authority in the state. We would probably all agree that government is concerned with authority, and authority has little meaning if divorced from ethical considerations. It may be argued that advances in analytical skills will eventually produce highly significant objective findings for guidance concerning values and morals in politics. How to use such data will remain a value judgment.

It is important to avoid the footless disputes that can arise from confusing the distinctive purposes of political philosophy and systematic political analysis. To argue their relative merits is to ask which leg is better. Both are needed for standing erect and moving forward in the world of practical affairs. Those studying politics and government, by the very nature of their subject matter, employ both normative and analytical approaches and often find collaboration with diverse specialists from other disciplines and professions very fruitful.

Granted, likewise, the importance for political scientists to specialize in fields of inquiry such as constitutional law or utility regulation or agricultural policy or international affairs, all of which call for informed

judgment on matters of public policy. Certainly, today there are many questions of policy and ethics that must be answered, but to which political analysis in any rigorous sense can offer little.

For quite some time to come the advance of political science is best pictured as a widespread skirmish line of small and brave platoons. And, as we know, some at times seem to rely upon heavy verbal barrages to protect, if not to screen, their efforts. The important fact, however, is the probing, the exploring, the quest that is under way.

While all this variety is stimulating, it renders difficult of achievement for political science as a special discipline what some students of the history of science refer to as "intellectual autonomy." Recurrently, there has been a struggle within fields of knowledge to organize in accordance with the evidence within its own domain and to rule out extraneous issues that cannot be resolved within the limits of the field as defined. For example, a hundred years ago or less, geology found itself preoccupied with "material proof of the existence of God through evidence of the direct interference of Providence in the determination of earth history."

Today, such a concern would be regarded as obviously irrelevant by geologists and, I daresay, by most theologians also. If political science develops into an ever more rigorous discipline, less attention will be devoted to speculation about imponderables, not because such matters are of any less intrinsic importance but rather because students of government, through improved methods of observation and analysis within the technical confines of political science, will view as more rewarding and significant their resultant findings. The microscope and the telescope opened up stranger worlds than ever pictured in the legends of Prester John. In other words, the outcome, I think, will turn upon methodological inventiveness rather than conversion through the dialectical skill of any one school of thought.

The practical, down-to-earth nature of most governmental problems and the pragmatic temper of political scientists in the United States protect us from much extraneous disputation. At best, "intellectual autonomy" for political science is a distant goal.

Although it may be difficult to define political science precisely as an autonomous body of knowledge and method, *political scientists* have proved their usefulness in a great variety of ways, both in practical affairs and research. Furthermore, the teaching of government is frequently refreshed by direct contact with the subject matter through participation in governmental affairs by political scientists. Such experiences broaden, stimulate, and bring a test of reality to academic inquiry.

The incomplete data available suggest that nearly half the membership of this Association are engaged in applying their political science training in pursuits other than teaching. In the light of experience, what types of training have proved most useful? What is the full range of career opportunities? In what skills are men best trained? What attracts students to graduate study in the field? In learning more about political scientists we may learn more about political science.

My second main theme, then, has been to point out that as we clarify and develop political science as a discipline we both serve our professional needs and perform the vital function of helping our democracy to know itself better.

This faces the profession with both responsibilities and opportunities. We cannot afford to ride personal hobbies, to hawk panaceas, to pass glib judgments, to take positions on mere partisan grounds. Normative questions must be thought through to their fundamental philosophic bases: here clear thinking rather than training in any preferred discipline seems most relevant.

As political scientists, we have the duty to search out the relevant facts of politics, to develop methods of analysis that reveal basic relationships, and to lay bare the political realities.

III

As voters understand such matters ever more clearly, they will, I believe, appraise shrewdly those individuals who seek to further their own interests through exploitation of public concern with the Communist contagion. The theory of "government by conspiracy" can spread a virus of mutual mistrust more enervating and difficult to eradicate than the red rash now so worrisome.

Once, bedding was burned for contamination of yellow fever: books more recently were burned for taint of Communism: in confusion and futility.

When will the transmission of erroneous information and propaganda be given a bit of the same cool, intelligent treatment as that devoted to infectious germs and political demonology be replaced perhaps by political epidemiology?

Witchdoctors, true to type, respond appropriately to the public attention they are accorded. They earn their publicity, however unfairly, by making news. And we buy it:

> for which of you will stop
> The vent of hearing when loud Rumour speaks?

Amid the present contrived excursions and alarums, it is a little difficult to picture John Q. Public settling down with a good book, say, on

the religious wars of the 17th century. I can, however, imagine an eventual state of mind that would make a whodunit seem more worth while than a who-thought-it, a who-joined-it, a who-isn't-saying, or a who-won't-tell. A feeling of boredom may help—so will a sense of humor; but behind all this, may I say MALARKEYISM, are problems of government that call for fresh examination.

We must go from the symptoms to the causes. A deep cause, I think, is a failure to understand the forces operating in the world around us. Why do so many Americans feel threatened? Is it the stubborn complexity of world problems and the difficulties arising from ideological differences and international rivalries that lead them to seek scapegoats among their fellow-countrymen? From the standpoint of efficient government, security clearances are necessary but so is the maintenance of administrative morale and the prestige of the public service.

We emerge victorious from a great war, stronger and more productive than ever before: the leader of the free world. Yet those who foster timidity, malice, suspicion, and penury seem able to weaken the operation of our representative institutions.

What do we witness only too often: emotional frustration built high upon ignorance. Those who picture the atomic bomb as a ready device for removing all wrong people if dropped in the right places apparently cannot understand why this simple operation has not already been performed. Faced with complex imponderables, man creates explanations: Zeus throws thunderbolts, bombs create tornadoes, the misguided or discarded enthusiasms of a few teachers or actors threaten the Republic!

Why assume that the conspiracy of Communism is best exposed where the limelight shines brightest? Hard training, sober judgment, and systematic effort is required to disclose and analyze adequately the designs of Soviet Imperialism. The exposure of these maneuverings is a job for specialists and requires high intelligence.

Moreover, this approach does not involve the risk of defeating our own ends by encroaching upon the traditional rights of citizenship. On the other hand, the practices of foreign dictators and domestic demagogues indicate that both draw their strength by playing upon ignorance, fear, and malice. Their sowing of suspicion and mistrust weakens normal human relationships and prepares the way for the further spread of their personal influence. Above all, they arrogate to themselves the testing of what constitutes loyalty to the state. The dictator grasps control of the instruments of power. Whether the demagogue becomes much more

than an ugly noise depends upon the strength of the support he can attract.

"The forces of intolerance and demagoguery are greedy forces and unrestrained," as George Kennan has so well said. "There is no limit to their ambitions or their impudence. They contain within themselves no mechanism of self-control."

Democratic government offers no automatic control of such forces. The checks and balances of our system, legal procedures and judicial review, the competition of interest groups and political parties, federalism and sectional politics, are all barriers to those who would consolidate dictatorial powers in their own hands. But the ultimate protection from the demagogue and the conspirator rests in the capacity of each citizen to weigh and to judge. The mechanism for democratic self-control is the citizen's inner control: his knowledge of government, his shrewd political judgment, his capacity to turn from emotional appeals and fears to a sensible estimate of the situation. These provide the safeguards against domestic demagoguery. A thoughtful and hard-headed approach to affairs governmental constitutes the base upon which security from foreign threats is erected.

In summary, then, I see manifestations current in politics that constitute a retreat from reason, and, to retreat from reason today is to relinquish faith in our capacity for self-government.

Clearly, many of the problems that confront us as citizens transcend the limits of present knowledge. Yet our political behavior and political wisdom or folly will be of determinant importance in all. All involve the study and understanding of government and political forces.

For example:

Much more needs to be known concerning social change, whether through revolutionary movements or adjustments demanded by the advances of technology.

Much more must be learned about the use of our human resources for the great variety of tasks that call for highly trained people; and this involves among other things holding and rewarding effective public servants.

A better understanding is called for of how to foster basic scientific inquiry and venturesome research and how to encourage bold creative thinkers, within our traditions of equality, of mass production, and material success.

There is need to study how best to integrate military strength within our democratic way of life for the maintenance of national security.

And, finally, more attention should be given to the burdens borne by lawmakers in our state legislatures and in Congress. Here is the high point in that continuum of relationships of voter to voter, to local officials, to elected representatives, and on through the stages and processes that make self-government operative.

This sense of the continuity and interrelatedness of the workings of self-government is best taught by political science. We have a long way to go before we know our political system in full measure; but study points the way and analytical skill provides the vanguard.

In conclusion, I say to you: at a time when world responsibilities demand courageous and constructive action, we cannot as citizens permit confidence in our public instrumentalities to be weakened or faith diminished in our capacity as a free nation to direct public policies to the enhancement of justice and liberty at home and abroad.