SCIENCE, GOVERNMENT, AND THE CASE OF RAND

A Singular Pluralism*

By PHILIP GREEN

Bruce L. R. Smith, *The RAND Corporation: Case Study of a Nonprofit Advisory Corporation*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1966, xiii, 332 pp. $7.95.

I

THE case study method, which despite the behavioral revolution is still the most popular method for studying political phenomena, continually confronts its practitioners with the necessity of solving the micro-macro, or levels-of-analysis problem. On the one hand, one can literally study a "case" in the most narrowly delimited way, risking no incautious generalizations but courting triviality. On the other hand, one can attempt to consider the implications of one's case for the total political system in which it is embedded, thus risking generalizations but avoiding triviality. The obvious difficulty with this latter course is the absence from most areas of political science of strong and generally accepted theories from which to generalize—i.e., theories providing causal or other connective links, preferably of a mathematical nature, between the performance of a system and the performance of units within a system.

The best resolution of this dilemma is hard to define rigorously. Put simply, it consists of formulating or borrowing the most sophisticated *approach* one can find to the particular aspect of the political system that is implicated in one's case study. (I hesitate to use the word "theory" where no operational, causal laws seem likely to be postulated —but perhaps this is too rigid.) Of course, what is meant by "most sophisticated" is exactly what is hard to state rigorously. In fact, this resolution merely substitutes one dilemma for another, "solving" the micro-

* Review articles in *World Politics* are ordinarily solicited, as was this article, by the editor primarily responsible for reviews. Solicitation complicates the decision about acceptance or rejection. At the time the editorial decision was due, the editors were sharply divided on the publishability of Mr. Green's article. The issue before the editors was whether or not the article was suitable for a scholarly journal such as *World Politics*. Mr. Falk definitely thought it was; Mr. Knorr thought it was not. The advice of four additional readers, the majority of whom favored publication, failed to resolve the issue. The editors agreed that it was best to publish the article and let each reader judge for himself.—*Richard A. Falk, Klaus Knorr*, Editors.

macro problem at the price of conjuring up an even more painful one: how to differentiate between assertions, approaches, and so on, none (or few) of which seem to consist of hypotheses leading to testable predictions. Do we political scientists, in fact, have any firm systemic knowledge that enables us really to discriminate among the various generalizations our colleagues make when trying to establish links between specific institutions or events and political systems as a whole?

The most that can be offered here, probably, is a subjective guide: our explanation of events within a system should form a pattern with the fewest pieces missing or events remaining unaccountable.[1] To put it another way, we adopt the pragmatic test that that which makes further advances in understanding possible—i.e., enables us to see previously unexplained factors as now at least tentatively explained—may itself be viewed as something we "know." Of course this definition of "knowing" merely pushes off a little further the day of reckoning when the philosophers of science, or those who set the ground rules for deciding when statements become "knowledge," will insist that a testable prediction be made. But lacking the ability to do that with the rigor of the "hard" sciences (except rarely), we can only proceed as best we can. And if even the pragmatic test seems to fail, in that there is disagreement among those doing serious work in a particular field as to whether a given hypothesis really *does* add to our understanding, then we can only fall back in the end on the traditional method of stating our reasons for our conclusions as completely and undogmatically as possible and letting the reader judge.[2]

No doubt this is a strenuous program to be forced to follow when all we really wish to do is to explain, say, who runs some small town in Illinois or how the regional field office of some bureau works or why a congressional bloc is antilabor. Why not instead leave the field of general political theorizing to those with the appetite and time for it and merely add our own increment of data as grist for their speculative mill?

This alternative is certainly reasonable. Unfortunately it is neither invariably attractive nor easy to put into practice. It is not attractive because no one likes to be trivial when he could be profound, a cog in a machine when he could be the motor. And it is not easy to put into practice because the student of a case so often, merely in order to place his

[1] Cf. Abraham Kaplan, *The Conduct of Inquiry* (San Francisco 1964), Part IX, "Explanation."

[2] An excellent statement of what may be meant by "rational discussion" of this sort is to be found in Richard E. Flathman, *The Public Interest* (New York 1966), Part II.

study "in a broader perspective," slides over—usually in his introduction or conclusions—into playing the role of political theorist. And when that happens we tend to get the worst of both possible worlds: the writer reaches into the existing collection of theories and speculations as into a grab bag and comes up with that "broader perspective" either most congenial to his own unstated bias or, simply, most currently conventional. Since personal bias does not necessarily guarantee relevance and since today's scientific convention can be tomorrow's folkish superstition, the field of study is not always improved by this kind of approach. It seems essential, therefore, if one cannot resolutely restrict the scope of one's investigations and comments, to play the political theorist as well as one can and to pay at least as much intellectual attention to that aspect of one's research as one pays to the empirical work itself.[3]

II

These reflections are prompted by Bruce Smith's recent study of RAND, which may itself be taken as a case study in the handling and not-handling of the dilemma described above.

At one level, *The RAND Corporation* is simply an intensive treatment of a new American form of enterprise, academia, and government action—the nonprofit research or advisory corporation, which Don K. Price has accurately described as "federalism by contract." At this level, Smith's work is excellent and of particular interest both to the student of public administration and to the public administrator himself. The broad question Smith asks is why RAND has been so successful—that is, why it has prospered according to its own outlook and has satisfied its sponsors according to theirs—in contrast to comparable but different types of research or advisory organization. The answer appears to be that RAND has succeeded so well because, both in its foundation and in its continuing operations, it "has been able to avoid a completely dependent status vis-à-vis the Air Force," its original and still primary sponsor. How RAND has managed this and what the most noteworthy particular aspects of its independence have been are the subsidiary questions to which Smith devotes the bulk of his study.[4]

The answers he gives are both informative and instructive; several are worth mentioning here. For example, the fact that RAND came into existence independently and *then* established its relationship with

[3] Compare David Easton's well-known remarks in *The Political System* (New York 1963), chap. 9.

[4] Smith's phrasing of the questions he wished to study may be found at p. 26.

the Air Force has given it its own raison d'être, its own primary tradition with which to generate high morale, loyalty, and a sense of self. Its location in California, away from "the hectic pace of Washington," has given RAND a freedom from the wearing demands of "crash projects," "task orders," and the like, demands that have seriously limited the intellectual independence of such comparable organizations as Analytic Services, Inc., and the Institute for Defense Analyses (pp. 74-76). Again, this freedom was furthered by the initial agreement of its founders that RAND be "neither conceived nor staffed . . . as an organization to provide quick answers for current problems." An example of RAND's determination to avoid this fate is seen in the history of the Systems Development Corporation, a "spin-off" of RAND which grew out of a personnel training project that RAND management recognized as being inconsistent with the desire to avoid doing routine work for the Air Force.

In addition, RAND's internal organization has also contributed greatly to its success, according to Smith. The aspects of that organization which he particularly notes are decentralization, which prevails to a high degree both between and within departments; emphasis on interdisciplinary work; broad support for "pure"—i.e., undirected—research; and maintenance of RAND control even over projects initiated from outside. Each of these organizational characteristics, like the aspects of RAND's history noted in the previous paragraph, has had something to do with RAND's ability to produce systematic, long-range, "creative" research rather than to engage in mere short-range tinkering with other peoples' ideas. Of course RAND has also had organizational problems and difficulties, which Smith does not slight; but in general his conclusion seems compelling: "The independent RAND 'atmosphere' in general seems more conducive for the emergence of truly creative ideas in policy research than the working atmosphere of the advisory unit closely tied to the sponsoring agency" (p. 107). At the level at which we have so far conducted this discussion—a level at which no embarrassing questions are asked about words like "creative" or "success"—comparisons between RAND's methods and other methods that have been developed to help science give service to government are helpful. This is so even though Smith seems to say that RAND's success in maintaining its independence has been largely the result of historical accident, for once we know what caused an accident, we can sometimes arrange similar "accidents" for the future, if we so desire.

III

Having said that much, however, we must return to the methodological question posed earlier: how do we go about relating such a study as this one to our knowledge of the political system of which RAND is a minuscule yet important part?

Of the available alternative approaches to resolving this problem, Smith has unfortunately adopted the worst. Given the subject matter, that was perhaps inevitable. Tentative generalizations about possible fruitful relationships between government agencies and nonprofit advisory corporations are useful but limited; almost as soon as one has made them one wants to go on and discuss the much more interesting question of whether and how such corporations ultimately contribute to or detract from the workings of a democratic polity. One could hardly write a book about RAND simply ignoring RAND's significance for the political system, for RAND has been the subject of much controversy on just that point. On the other hand, to focus full attention both on such a narrow yet complex subject matter *and* on larger issues of political theory would probably require years of effort. In any event, what Smith has done is to take what I have called the "grab bag" approach to the larger subject of science, government, and democratic politics. He has not, to be sure, come up empty-handed. Rather, as is indicated by the following remarks, he has come up with what is presently the most conventional and approved approach to American politics —the notion that there is some kind of pluralist political order in American democracy which checks particular institutions that might otherwise contribute to an imbalance of political power:

> . . . The pluralism of the advisory system, in which RAND is only one institution among many with access to persons in authority, helps assure that no one group will monopolize the attention of policy makers (p. 315).

> As developments in science and technology increasingly affect other areas of public policy, there can only be a growing need for the kind of advisory service that RAND has provided various defense clients. In general, it would seem highly desirable for similar advisory capabilities to be built up by nondefense agencies. . . . The way to assure that important alternatives are not neglected in the processes of policy formation is to develop the broadest possible advisory base (p. 317).

> Used properly, the advisory institution like RAND can contribute to sensible policy decisions and can help to maintain the dynamism of America's pluralist governing system.
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> In the net, the device of the RAND-type advisory corporation seems to reflect both the strengths and weaknesses of American pluralism. The presence of a number of advisory institutions like RAND helps to assure decision makers of a broad base of scientific advice and to guard against the dangers of a closed system with a narrow technocracy cut off from the healthy effect of outside criticism. There is very little danger that anything like a monolithic statism or a vast bureaucracy on Weberian lines will emerge, given a system which decentralizes expertise and influence throughout many different institutions in society. The real dangers of this system may not be what is commonly supposed. The chief danger may well be that familiar problem of American politics: keeping organizational pluralism within some sort of bounds so that a framework for coherent, unified, and sustained national policies can be maintained (p. 321).

What I shall try to show in the remainder of this discussion is that every one of these remarks about RAND is at best highly questionable and is indeed sustained not by any evidence that Smith offers—the contrary is the case, in fact—but rather by a kind of simple act of faith in "the system." First, however, it is necessary that we see just why it is that an uncritical acceptance of the notion of "pluralism" is such a poor basis for a serious discussion of the role of scientists in government. Not all of the difficulties with the pluralist description of the American political system are relevant to a full account of the operations of RAND. But as we shall discover, several of them are indeed highly relevant to that account.

On its face, the description of the American political system given by the pluralists seems self-evidently accurate.[5] Elections are claimed, more

[5] The literature of the pluralist approach to American politics is immense and continues to proliferate. The best recent work in the genre is Arnold Rose, *The Power Structure* (New York 1967). Other well-known examples of this approach are Robert Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago 1956) and *Who Governs?* (New Haven 1961); Nelson W. Polsby, *Community Power and Political Theory* (New Haven 1963); Daniel Bell, "Is There a Ruling Class in America? The Power Elite Reconsidered," in his *The End of Ideology*, rev. ed. (New York 1965); David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven 1950), Part II; Seymour Martin Lipset, *The First New Nation* (New York 1963), 318-48; Talcott Parsons, "The Distribution of Power in American Society," *World Politics*, x (October 1957), 123-43; John K. Galbraith, *American Capitalism* (Boston 1952); and David Truman, *The Governmental Process* (New York 1953). For an interesting and somewhat different viewpoint, see William Kornhauser, "Power Elite or 'Veto Groups,'" in Seymour Martin Lipset and Leo Lowenthal, eds., *Culture and Social Character* (Glencoe 1961).

or less, to determine the ultimate course of public policy in a very general way. At the more concrete levels of the legislative and administrative processes "the people" do not participate directly, but their desires are still felt through the operations of competing interest groups. Elites are formed by the leaders of these groups, but there is no single "power elite," for the elites, like the groups, are competitive. Some have a degree of control over policies that are closely related to their interests, but none has real control over a very wide range of policies. The system, in sum, runs on the basis of elections, influence, and persuasion; the first are free, and the sources of the latter two are both multifold and diverse. The government, formed on the basis of democratic elections, is capable of establishing "countervailing power" when the resultant of group pressures is skewed too far from the norm of equality.

I have said that this description of the American political system seems self-evidently accurate. As often, however, appearances are deceiving, for granting that there is no conspiratorial power elite, no monolithic "power structure," no absolute vertical hierarchy in American politics, certain very grave problems remain for pluralist theory as described above.[6]

1. With regard to the assumption that in a democracy numbers finally tell, it is true that many issues are technically subject to ultimate voter control. Often, however, especially in the areas of policy administration and policy formulation (as opposed to formal policy approval), as well as in the control of the political parties themselves, resources other than the vote are crucial, especially money, activism (participation), and education, all of which taken together give one the ability to persuade others. But money and education are not distributed equally, and though activism in theory can be, in practice the predisposition to be active is not independent of the possession of some combination of money and education.[7] Furthermore, the distribution of resources is affected by pub-

[6] Among the many works calling into question various aspects of the pluralist approach are the following: Theodore Lowi, "The Public Philosophy: Interest-Group Liberalism," *American Political Science Review*, LXI (March 1967), 5-24, and "American Business, Public Policy, Case-Studies, and Political Theory," *World Politics*, XVI (July 1964), 677-715; Peter Bachrach, *The Theory of Democratic Elitism* (Boston 1967) and, with Morton S. Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," *American Political Science Review*, LVI (December 1962), 947-52; Henry Kariel, *The Promise of Politics* (Englewood Cliffs 1966), esp. chap. 4; Robert S. Lynd, "Power in American Society as Resource and Problem," in Arthur W. Kornhauser, ed., *Problems of Power in American Democracy* (Detroit 1957); S. Ono, "The Limits of Bourgeois Pluralism," *Studies on the Left*, V (Summer 1965), 46-72; and Grant McConnell, *Private Power and American Democracy* (New York 1966).

[7] Intensity of preference, which also affects influence on outcomes, is also distributed unequally—at least with regard to the ability to *express* it in relevant ways. On the prerequisites and problems of participation, see Dahl, *Preface*, 71ff.

lic policy and can be shifted in any direction; no one has as yet observed a law of developing equality in the *outcomes* of legislation.[8]

2. In any event, complete majoritarian political party control over issues does not exist in the United States in its idealized English version (nor does it exist even in England). The formal processes of decision-making are fragmented, with varying degrees of authority being parcelled out to the appointive bureaucracy, the military, congressional committees, individual congressmen, and state and local governments (which may themselves be equally fragmented). Thus constituencies that are in no way representative of the whole electorate nor even democratically organized in themselves may have inordinate influence during the bargaining that goes on in the formal policy-making process.[9] All these special obstacles to majoritarian accountability, moreover, operate so as to make concerted action difficult and to reward desires for inaction or slow action. Those groups that *have* benefited from government action in the past or are for other reasons in relatively little need of governmental assistance tend to be favored over those that as yet have not been so favored. Furthermore, a special aspect of the fragmentation of political authority is that much *public* authority in the United States has been parcelled out to *private* persons or groups, on a highly inequalitarian basis.[10] Given the considerable importance of sheer inertia in any political system, it is highly probable that an immense and special effort would have to be made to reclaim this authority if it were to be redistributed on a more equalitarian basis.

To the extent that majority rule is admitted by the theorists of pluralism to be absent, that circumstance is supposed to be mitigated by the diversity of the multifold sources of influence within the system. But—

3. It is possible for large intellectual or ideological minorities to be

[8] For example, the cases of COMSAT or the 1962 tax cut or the continuing oil depletion allowance are evidence of this. It should be observed that even where access to decision-making processes is distributed equally, compromise *outcomes* may be highly unequal because the prevailing social context favors one group or another in bargaining. Some demands may simply not be made because a group sees no hope in making them or thinks of them as "illegitimate"; some demands may not have to be made because the desiderata contained in them are automatically granted by custom or long-settled law. On this point, see Bachrach and Baratz.

[9] And even when presidential or party leadership is most centralizing, voter control through representatives or parties is not always *technically* possible. Some of the technical problems of majority voting and voter control are discussed in Dahl's *Preface*, chap. 4. And see also Herbert McCloskey and others, "Issue Conflict and Consensus Among Party Leaders and Followers," *American Political Science Review*, LIV (March 1960), 405-27, on the divergence of interests and goals between political leaders and political followers.

[10] McConnell, *Private Power*, and Lowi, "The Public Philosophy," contain especially good accounts and critiques of this process.

effectively ignored for long periods of time by both parties, given the kind of nonpolarized two-party system that exists in the United States. If such persons are either not numerous enough or not so strategically placed as to be potentially salient in the electorate for either party, or if "their" issue is not so absolutely salient in their minds that the parties cannot "buy them off" by rewarding other interests of theirs, then an agreement between party leaders not to compete may be unassailable for years or even decades. In certain of its manifestations this phenomenon is called bipartisanship; foreign policy during the cold-war era has offered, on frequent occasions, a typical example of its operation.

4. Even were we to posit an *overall* equality in influence among diverse political groups, equality does not prevail in specific spheres of decision-making; especially is this true of foreign and defense policy-making. As Arnold Rose notes at the end of his major effort to reevaluate and bolster pluralist theory, "The major area of small-group control of national policy remaining in the country [is] that of foreign policy. The most powerful arm of this small group—namely the President and his official advisers—are quite exposed to the public. But there are secret decision-makers operating in this area also—secret in that their influence and processes of decision-making are not accessible to the public."[11]

5. Finally, and perhaps most significant for our purposes here, no reason has been given by the pluralist theorists for believing that all *issues* are of equal weight in the polity. One does not have to accept C. Wright Mills' relegation of Congress to the "middle levels of power" to suggest that *some* decisions in any society dominate—determine, preclude—future decisions.[12] That being so, it becomes terribly important to know which if any of the competing elites is predominant in that particular area. And to the extent that policies for war and peace are surely of such a nature, one cannot make light of the fact that foreign policy is "the major area of small-group control."

Thus to say that there is no "power elite" running things is to make a fairly obvious (except to the conspiracy-minded) and very minimal claim. It is also true that all definable groups among the people do not have equal power, that "the people" as individuals do not have equal political power (even when their overlapping group memberships are taken into account), that "the majority" does not necessarily have power consistent with its numbers, and that rewards are not necessarily distributed on the basis of who holds or is granted formal political power.

[11] P. 488.
[12] Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York 1957), chap. 11.

That being so, it is quite inappropriate to use the assumed pluralism of the political system for reassurance that a given actor in the system is not too influential. On the contrary, we must begin our analysis of particular political actors with the assumption that democratic "pluralism" in any meaningful sense is completely problematical. Actors such as RAND must be assessed on the basis of whether they make a democratic plural order more or less likely of achievement. That they fit in well with and contribute to the system is matter for congratulation only if we assume that all the system's tendencies are equalitarian—as does Smith in his casual acceptance of the pluralist approach. Once vary that initial assumption—once assume, in other words, that some tendencies in the system may be inequalitarian—and a totally different approach to the case study is called for. We have now to ask not whether "our" case—our actor—fits into the system, but rather which among divergent tendencies of the system it fits into. And when discussing the role of scientists in government, specifically, we have to ask whether the activities of a particular group of scientists seem to increase or decrease the likelihood of the democratization of influence.

IV

When we ask, then, the question I have suggested immediately above, a picture of RAND's significance which is quite different from the one offered by Smith comes into focus. We can see this clearly by concentrating for a moment on one specific issue that is also central to his discussion and uppermost in the minds of those who are concerned about RAND's position in the political system: what effect has RAND had on the process of national security policy-making in this country and on the nature of influence in that policy-making process?

The essential point that emerges immediately when we ask this question is that although RAND is far from ideologically monolithic in the broad field of national security policy analysis, by Smith's own evidence it has been unquestioningly oriented toward the general *perspectives*, if not always the concrete policies, of the foreign policy elite (giving that phrase as wide a coverage as one wishes). And this orientation has had some profound consequences for American "pluralism."

To see this more clearly, let us consider the now famous overseas air bases study of Albert Wohlstetter and his colleagues, which Smith proposes, in his chapter "RAND in Operation: A Case Study," as an example par excellence of the RAND "systems analysis" method at work. This study, Smith tells us, "pointed toward the shattering conclusion that in the last half of the 1950's the Strategic Air Command, the world's

most powerful striking force, faced the danger of obliteration from enemy surprise attack under the then-programmed strategic basing system" (p. 208). "The then-programmed system of advanced overseas operating bases . . . would, in consequence [of its vulnerability], have the least destruction potential of enemy targets of any of the systems. . . .The cornerstone of U.S. policy at the time—deterrence of aggression through the nuclear striking power of the Strategic Air Command and destruction of enemy industrial targets if deterrence failed—was thus seen to be jeopardized by the projected basing system. Indeed, the whole concept of deterrence as it was then conceived seemed in need of revision" (pp. 213-14). Smith adds that after Malenkov's announcement that the USSR had detonated a hydrogen bomb "Wohlstetter and his colleagues capitalized on this announcement in the late summer briefings to dramatize the dangers of an enemy first-strike against vulnerable overseas bases" (p. 225). And in summary he concludes, "Several previous studies had dealt generally with the problem of vulnerability, but none had drawn explicit attention to the need for developing a deterrent force capable of surviving an initial enemy atomic assault and still inflicting unacceptable damage on the enemy" (p. 232).

These passages, I think, adumbrate an uncritical conception of the role of scientists in government, which in turn clearly rests on Smith's uncritical conception of his subject matter itself. (In an earlier chapter Smith throws a decade of sometimes vicious interservice rivalry into the discard with the remark that "RAND's recruitment had benefited in the past from the broad Air Force mission which was almost equivalent to the whole of the nation's defense effort.") Thus he appears to have no interest in the validity of the many assumptions with which the passages just quoted are strewn or in the actual policy outcome itself and the continuing debate about deterrence strategies.[13] On the contrary, his argument is that what is important about RAND's studies is not their outcomes but the process that produced them—that is, RAND's methodological innovations in the field of systems analysis and operations research.[14] But it is not enough to say naively that a new method is "a contribution"; surely we want to know *to whom and to what purposes* it contributes. Such a question Smith never asks, apparently in the belief

[13] For an exhaustive critique of those assumptions and of deterrence policy itself, see Philip Green, *Deadly Logic: The Theory of Nuclear Deterrence* (Columbus 1966); and Amitai Etzioni, *The Hard Way to Peace* (New York 1962).

[14] It should be said that this is *sometimes* his argument. Especially throughout chap. 4, we can find examples of both viewpoints; on the whole, however, I think that celebration of the techniques themselves is Smith's dominant attitude. See, for example, his concluding remarks (pp. 315ff.).

that the methods I have mentioned are "value-neutral" and have no particular purposes built into them.[15] And this is too bad, for as I have argued elsewhere, RAND's systems analyses have in practice been far from value-neutral, except in the sardonic sense that the systems approach applied to significant questions of public policy will betray, indiscriminately, the biases of whoever is doing the study.[16] Even RAND has not yet discovered a way to make interdisciplinary teams of social scientists see the world with any eyes but their own, and when the most valued objects in the human universe are at stake—life, liberty, happiness—those eyes rarely see with complete dispassion. Therefore we must surely ask if the bias with which RAND workers have seen the world has been a systematic one. If it has been, then the new methods of analysis may very well have had a systematic effect on RAND's work, and thus, since RAND has been an important actor in the political system, on the distribution of influence in government.

With this question now in mind, let us take a more careful look at the RAND overseas bases study. That study rested on two familiar propositions: that vulnerability equals provocation to an "enemy" and that the Soviet Union and the U.S. are (or were) engaged in an undeclared war, with Western Europe as one of the stakes to be defended at all costs. The first proposition purports to stand on a solid evidential base, but is in fact usually asserted, or rather deduced, as a logical corollary of the second.[17] As for that latter proposition, it is simply the root assumption behind the "official" American position in the cold war. Where this

[15] Examples of Smith's approach to the methodological question may be found on pp. 10-11, 24-25, 64-65, and 316, among many other instances. The language he uses in describing the adoption of innovative techniques is invariably the language of necessity, e.g., "The 'analytic' style in defense decision making is probably an inescapable concomitant of the growing complexity of defense issues" (p. 316).

[16] See Green, *Deadly Logic*, esp. chaps. 2-4 and 7, and "Method and Substance in the Arms Debate," *World Politics*, XVI (July 1964), 642-67. Smith expresses one caveat on the question of value-neutrality: "There have doubtless been occasions when analytic studies have made unrealistic assumptions, drawn false or misleading inferences from empirical data, and failed to take into consideration vital aspects of a broad problem. But this is not an argument against the advisory function in principle; this is an argument for more and better analysis and an increased professionalism in the advisory ranks" (pp. 315-16). Unfortunately, the notion that professionals are especially adept at avoiding unrealism, falsity, and narrowness is one for which little evidence has ever been offered, at least with regard to the social sciences. Indeed, in the complicated area of national security analysis only Laplace's Demon will ever know what is "real" and "true" before the fact. What is needed is not truer assumptions but an analytic method that generates *varying* assumptions about the political world and calls forth the full range of its practitioners' political wisdom and moral judgment. The RAND technique of systems analysis does none of these things.

[17] The more we look back at the development of deterrence theory, the harder it becomes to tell whether these propositions were ever really empirically separable. On this point, see my comments in *Deadly Logic*, 106ff.

assumption came from is a matter for the historian; for our purposes what is most important about it is how all-pervasive it can be, and has been, as a "given" in scholarly analysis.

For example, in a footnote on page 108, Smith recites a long list of RAND-supported projects in the field of Soviet studies. Of those with which I am familiar, none puts that basic assumption to any kind of test. Most of them are indeed meritorious pieces of research—but wholly within the framework of the cold-war perspective. Thus we see that RAND's work strengthens the policy-makers' intuitions about the "enemy," which become in turn the grounding for other RAND work —such as the bases study—in the field of military strategy. This is a familiar pattern of affairs and not necessarily one without value in a policy context; but it also has its dangers.

To take but one instance, several of the works on the Soviet Union listed by Smith—especially those of Leites, Mead, and Selznick—treat Soviet political (and thus, by implication, diplomatic) behavior as taking place within an attitudinal framework marked by extremes of hostility and ideological rigidity. (Like many other Soviet studies in this nation, RAND's seem to have undergone a "thaw" in recent years.) Such studies obviously provided intellectual strengthening for American fears in the cold war; yet in the context of that conflict they are sadly deficient. After all, RAND has never undertaken similar studies of the psychology of its own employers, namely, the U.S. Air Force and important American elected and appointed officials.[18] What might Nathan Leites have made of General LeMay, who has recommended that we should bomb the North Vietnamese "back to the Stone Age"? When asked about the contribution RAND makes to the power of such men, a high RAND official replied that " 'LeMay has the same kind of human qualities that the average man has, just like a teacher or a doctor.' " No doubt he has; and no doubt so do those Russians who engage in "The Ritual of Liquidation," who formulated "The Operational Code of the Politburo," who created "The Organizational Weapon."[19] I am not suggesting that RAND should necessarily undertake analyses of its employers (though if its various analytic techniques are really as sophisticated as they are supposed to be, such work might be helpful). The absence of such studies on our side does not demonstrate that we may be in the hands of paranoid ideologues or that the Soviet "missile

[18] This point was made first by Sol Stern in his "Who Thinks in a Think Tank?" *New York Times Magazine* (April 16, 1967), 28. The quotations cited here are taken from p. 122 of Stern's article.

[19] These are, of course, the titles of RAND-sponsored works by Leites and Selznick on Soviet ideology and politics.

gap" is the real danger to world peace; it only demonstrates the peculiar nature of RAND's vaunted intellectual "independence."

Realistically, rather than multiply information bearing on the attitudes and "operational codes" of world leaders—or even on their strategic theories, about which we owe almost everything we know on the Soviet side to RAND—we might do better to concentrate more on their actual behavior in world politics and on some hard thinking about what that behavior may signify. Can the meaning of the cold war to the USSR be deduced by quotation-mongering from Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, and Sokolovski, from attitude studies, and so on? Or should we not primarily ask what the USSR and the U.S. have actually *done* to create and carry on the cold war? I think that this is obviously the case—and it then becomes important to note further that RAND, to my knowledge (and Smith gives no examples to the contrary), has produced no important contributions to the ongoing study of the cold war itself.

Thus, although RAND has been intellectually independent to the extent of strenuously questioning its employers' concrete policies, it has *not* been "independent" to the extent of questioning either the nature of the jobs they are performing or their basic values[20]—a point that we can see only if, unlike Smith, we pay attention to the substance of what our subjects do, as well as to how they do it. This point having once been seen, it follows that the "success" of RAND's work in the area I have been discussing does not demonstrate how fortunate American society is in its intellectual pluralism. Rather, RAND's "success" shows how flexible part of our military bureaucracy is, in that it is capable of actually buying the most sophisticated weapons systems available; and this is a far different matter.

Of course, it is not self-evident that this criticism—that the relationship of particular scientists and government agencies is made more problematical by such a sharing of values and perspectives between the two—is at all noteworthy. With regard to RAND, for example, we can think of several reasons why what has been said here need not be taken as a criticism of even a minor aspect of the American political system. (Some of these reasons are mentioned by Smith; none is discussed at length. Thus a reviewer is left in the position of setting up straw men

[20] Apparently RAND personnel are able to live with the following passage from an internal Air Force study, written about 1952, and quoted by Smith: " 'The lawyer-client relationship of RAND to the Air Force places upon RAND certain restrictions. It is inevitable that the three Departments of the National Military Establishment will compete for budgets, facilities, and military responsibilities. As a result, it is inappropriate for RAND to "represent" more than one of the services' " (p. 83).

rather than dealing with real arguments.) These are, first, that RAND has produced work of a more genuinely critical nature than is suggested by my remarks and has had an opportunity that might otherwise have been lacking to convey its critique to policy-makers; second, that RAND researchers have contributed to the nation purely technical advances with which no one could possibly quarrel, from "fail-safe" procedures to new modes of mathematical analysis to new uses for titanium and beryllium;[21] third, that on the subject of military policy vis-à-vis the USSR both RAND and its employers merely reflect the will and the preferences of the American people themselves; and finally, that in any event RAND is in fact only one among plural *and* pluralistic sources of influence employing social scientists and generating usable research in the U.S. These points deserve consideration, for together they cast some additional light on the theory and practice of "democratic pluralism."

The first statement is certainly true. It is no secret, for instance, that some present RAND personnel disagree with American policy toward China and have produced work that can be read as calling into question certain basic American values in this area, rather than mere policy preferences. At the same time, it is impossible to believe that those agencies that fund RAND's work—especially the Air Force—will continue to support research that does not give them any payoff and is not likely to do so in the future. In a society that values the "free" intellect (at least rhetorically), a sophisticated employer will tolerate, even welcome, large amounts of eccentricity and deviation; that is merely a subsidiary cost to be charged against the overall gains. Smith himself testifies to how great the Air Force has found these gains to be, as in the overseas bases study; RAND has surely paid its way to support a few critics of China policy.

In fact, it is paying its way now, since it has under way several projects supportive of the military effort in Vietnam, one of which is designed to help the Air Force find out how it "might use tactical air support more effectively in combat against the Vietcong."[22] In any event, however, it is not the integrity or the subjective freedom of RAND that is under discussion, but rather the policy process into which RAND fits. That process is one in which government agencies (by now, it should be noted, not the Air Force alone as far as RAND is con-

[21] Smith's list of RAND "contributions" begins at p. 109.

[22] The quotation is from Stern's article, p. 119, and is apparently based on an interview with Amron Katz of RAND. Stern also mentions other RAND studies related to the war effort, at least one of which has generated useful scholarly data that are being kept secret for political reasons.

cerned) are the chief source of funds for a research organization that is supposed, among other things, to provide information affecting agency policies: payment for value received. And the really important question is whether this special relationship should be viewed as adding an increment of strength or an increment of weakness to the pluralist tendencies in the political system.

The answer is not difficult to find. A clue to it can be found in Smith's remark that, in attempting to "sell" the results of the bases study, "Wohlstetter gave 92 briefings (most of them during the period from March [1953] to the end of October)" to the Air Force. One need only ask how many scientists *not* in a special relationship with a government agency get a chance to lobby for the adoption of their proposals *ninety-two times* in a period of less than a year? And with the cachet of being professionally intimate with high officials in that agency? And known, additionally, to have asked no embarrassing questions about that agency's primary mission itself: the deterrence of a supposedly expectable Communist attack on Western Europe or the U.S. itself?

Generally speaking, in any political system the kind of access to decision-making responsibility that RAND obtained in this case depends on the possession of relevant resources. In essence, by supporting RAND the government through the Air Force paid for the recruitment of a new member to the political elite in the area of national security policy-making. But that is only one aspect of what actually happened, for money is only one resource for access. The most relevant resource for access to national strategy councils has always been agreement on fundamentals. This agreement indeed helps define what is meant by "expertise," which then refers to the possession not only of relevant skills but also of acceptable attitudes.[23] In this instance there was a positive payoff for both parties to the transaction because and only because of the compatibility of their attitudes, chief of which was a desire, not to put too fine a point on it, to provide military security as perceived within the intellectual confines of the cold-war perspective. I think it is fair to doubt that any other fundamental attitude would have been acceptable to the Air Force; and even now, were RAND to become known as a prominent lobbyist *against* the administration's Asian policy, as it was *for* deterrence policy, it would surely lose its favored position. Be that as it may, my proposition is certainly not put to the test by the mere fact of RAND's being hospitable to diverse viewpoints. Research embarrassing to the client can, after all, be ignored (as, there is every evidence, work emanating from RAND which is critical of our

[23] I have remarked on this point at more length in *Deadly Logic*, chap. 7.

China policy is being ignored). On the other hand, research deemed helpful by the client has a special chance to be influential—a chance not vouchsafed the work of an ordinary American social scientist, who thus is deprived of equal access to his government. If this form of inequality were distributed randomly, the result would perhaps offend only the most dogmatic of populists or anti-intellectuals. But it is not distributed randomly; it is distributed *by the Air Force*—and even the most sanguine portrayals of the American political system do not mention the military sector as a strength of pluralism, whatever other virtues it may have.[24]

Similar considerations apply to the argument that RAND is only one of many, or at least of several, similar organizations in a plural society, some public, some semipublic, some private.[25] Once again the statement is true but irrelevant. To speak of a meaningful pluralism in this connection we would have to believe, first, that independent research groups with no built-in bias toward the military have as effective an access to government as does RAND, and second, that the agencies they have access to—say the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency—are themselves nearly as influential *and* well-financed as the Air Force. Neither of those propositions is credible.

Furthermore, it should be noted that RAND's access to important loci of power in government is even more special than the story of Wohlstetter's briefings reveals. Smith's account on occasion seems less a history of RAND than a case study on interlocking directorates for an antitrust textbook. The RAND board of trustees in 1965 (p. 185, n. 29) reads like a burlesque of Mills' notions of the "power elite," not merely in who is included—great universities and scientific research centers, public utilities and the monopolistic mass media, big oil, defense industry—but in who is excluded—labor unions or federations, the small liberal arts colleges, public power and rural electrification associations, independent small business or media operators, independent

[24] Arnold Rose takes a qualifiedly hopeful view of the growing military role in American politics (pp. 134-52), but at one point (p. 141) he writes: "There is evidence to support the view that the United States is moving in the direction of the garrison state—the already mentioned use of military 'expertise,' placement of military men into civilian posts, and the increasing trend toward secrecy in government. There is also some evidence to support the thesis that science, technology, labor, and industry are becoming increasingly dependent upon the military." Later (p. 142) Rose says: "If the garrison state should develop in the United States the trends suggest that the political elite would dominate it here also, rather than an economic or military elite." It is not clear if Rose thinks that such an eventuality would be preferable to the alternatives, or, if so, why.

[25] At p. 143 Smith offers a long list of research institutes in the field of national security that have been inspired by RAND's success.

organizations of scientists and scholars. The categories of representation on the board are themselves a study in the new elite: Industrial Trustees, Academic and Scientific Trustees, and "Public Interest" Trustees (whose identity, at least on the 1965 board, is hard to discover).[26] This pattern holds true for all of RAND's history, moreover, from its founding under the auspices of the Douglas Aircraft Company to its later financing by the great foundations. Smith's innocent remark that the "original decision to fill the Board with men of high standing has paid off handsomely for RAND over the years" is certainly true—and is also certainly destructive of any naive ideas about the "pluralism" of the research community, since "men of high standing" are not available to just *any* group of scientists or scholars.

In the end, the only analogy we can find for RAND's operations is Robert Engler's description of "the permeability of oil."[27] Like the oil industry giants (who are themselves incidentally represented at RAND), RAND is everywhere, maintaining "informal contacts" with congressmen and congressional committee staffs, serving on "advisory committees, boards, and consultant groups" of the government, and in general having "a number of friends in high places and a voice in important policy decisions difficult to imagine a decade earlier" (p. 140). And all this political access, in addition, is supported by a tax exemption that, despite Smith's careful defense of it, is quite obviously indefensible except by legalistic appeal to a defective law. Groups such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Sierra Club have been threatened with loss of tax-exempt status for attempting "to influence legislation," and this fact leads Smith to ask whether "carrying on policy-oriented research [is] 'attempting to influence legislation'" (p. 192). He does not answer the question, but since it repays close study by answering itself that does not matter.[28] Plainly, the propaganda activities of, say, the FOR are pitifully thin compared to the intensive lobbying of Wohlstetter and his associates for the bases study or of Herman Kahn and his

[26] It is important to note that Smith never questions whether the words "academic," "university," and such, are done justice by the close ties between such scientific research centers as M.I.T.—which has a retired Air Force general as its vice-president—and the government. One must at least ask whether the presence on the RAND board of such men as the presidents of Rice University and Case Institute, the provost of M.I.T., the director of the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, or the vice-president of the Brookings Institution actually adds to the Board any viewpoint unique to academia.

[27] *The Politics of Oil* (New York 1961), chap. 12.

[28] At p. 97, Smith does emphasize RAND's attempt "to avoid identification with partisan causes." The apparent assumption that "nonpartisan" causes, whatever they may be, are somehow free of the taint of politics is an assumption that can be supported only by the most narrow, Bentleyan view of what constitutes political life and political action. On this point, see below, p. 322.

associates for civil defense. No doubt the law tacitly distinguishes between administrative lobbying and legislative lobbying, but the distinction is maintained not by a realistic assessment of the legislative process in America but by the careful tailoring of most of our lobbying and tax laws to the requirements of big business. The very fact that RAND can cohabit peacefully with a provision that systematically discriminates against political outsiders and systematically favors political insiders is itself the most telling point one can make about RAND's place in our plural political order.

And thus the proposition that RAND contributes an unquestionably positive good to that order becomes itself not entirely credible. The root notion behind all pluralist theory is that somewhere there is a countervailing power for every source of independent power one discovers. If one cannot point to groups or institutions that truly countervail, then pluralism as a descriptive category has become rhetoric rather than analysis.[29] If, keeping this in mind, we return to the criterion suggested earlier for linking case studies of this kind to the macrosystem, we are led to the following conclusion: the RAND Corporation, by making the Air Force a more effective instrument of national policy and by strengthening the Air Force's links with the corporate sector, without making any attempt to help establish *countervailing powers* within or outside of the government, is in fact contributing to the *anti*pluralist tendencies in American politics.[30]

V

At this point, we clearly must deal with the two remaining arguments suggested above in defense of RAND's value-sharing with government. Some of RAND's technical and technological innovations, I said, can be seen as having contributed to the *national* security, as its military advice has to *national* strategy; and has there not been a *national* consensus on the cold-war values to which I have been continually referring? If all this is true, surely we do not need to seek the establishment of countervailing powers against the very interest of the whole nation itself; that would be an absurdity.[31] If it is true, then Smith's happy

[29] Thus the invocation of the institutions referred to in n. 25 above is rhetorical rather than analytic, since the nature of their work, support, and power is left totally unexplored by Smith.

[30] The concept of "countervailing power" seems to me to be at the core of the pluralist approach; see Galbraith for the original formulation of this notion.

[31] For an expression of this viewpoint, see Glenn H. Snyder, "The Politics of National Defense: A Review of Samuel P. Huntington, *The Common Defense*," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, VI (December 1962), 368-73. A cogent reply to Snyder, and indeed the most cogent handling of the "national interest" question that I know of, is Bernard

conclusion is correct: everyone has gained and no one has lost by RAND's performance of its special role. Or, as he puts it: "From its position as friendly critic, RAND injected heretical ideas into the Air Force hierarchy which stimulated needed change. . . . As defense-policy choices become ever more complex, there can only be a growing need for some set of institutions to help serve as a bridge between the realm of 'closed politics' and the larger public. . . . The advisory corporation like RAND can serve a vital function in tapping the intellectual capabilities of people outside the government for work on public problems and in generally promoting the public understanding necessary for the successful functioning of modern democratic government" (pp. 236, 240).

Unfortunately the viewpoint expressed in the paragraph above is either tautological—"needed change" is change needed by those with the power to make it; the national interest is that interest that national leaders pursue—or else it has a secret meaning discernible only to the mystical nationalist. We can, if comprehensible communication between informed citizens is our aim, often make distinctions between policies aimed at a national interest and those clearly directed to parochial or class interests.[32] But we can do no more than that, except by arbitrary assertion. Where there are competing policies designed to promote "the national interest" we can argue more or less persuasively in favor of our own proposals, but unless our opponents violate the rules of sensible discourse (e.g., engage in self-contradiction, misrepresent the evidence), we cannot establish that ours is *the* policy "actually in" the national interest. That it is eventually chosen by majority rule, or in some cases by a tacit consensus somewhere short of unanimity, would be beside the point, for these are only rules of fairness in decision-making, not criteria of "truth" or "rightfulness."[33]

To return then to our problem, the overseas bases study inspired

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C. Cohen, "Military Policy Analysis and the Art of the Possible," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, VI (June 1962), 154-59. As the dates suggest, Cohen's article is not actually a reply to Snyder's; rather, it is a review of Snyder's book *Deterrence and Defense* (Princeton 1961).

[32] Compare the remark of Walter Stein, "It is common, indeed usual, to be uncertain of a boundary but quite certain of what lies well to the east or west of it . . ." (in Stein, ed., *Morals and Missiles: Catholic Essays on the Problem of War Today* [London 1959], 25).

[33] Some discussions of democratic theory have seemed to suggest that what is meant by "pluralism" is contention over particular policies, but consensus on basic beliefs; when one attempts to act outside that consensus, one can only expect to be ignored or thwarted. (See, for example, Dahl's *Who Governs?*, chap. 28.) It may be that Smith, Glenn Snyder, and others have some such view in mind with regard to the "foreign policy consensus," as Gabriel Almond calls it in his *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York 1950). However, I do not think that point is applicable to this discussion. Descriptively, no doubt, the proposition about consensus is unexceptionable and

"needed change" and promoted "public understanding" if and only if the conception of national security forwarded by it happened to be one's own and was in need of greater sophistication. Effectively this means that that study was unquestionably in *the* (one and only) national interest only if there was at the time national *unanimity* on what *the* national interest was.

But of course there was no such unanimity about the national interest, not even at the time of the Korean War. The premises of the cold war itself—that a major nuclear deterrent is (or rather, was) desirable; that the Soviets posed a genuine military threat to Western Europe; that in various corners of the globe an American military presence is necessary to halt Communist expansionism; that, in sum, a struggle for the world has been under way since the end of World War II—have never been seen as beyond debate in the intellectual community.[34] It is (or was) possible to argue with conviction and intelligence one of the following propositions in response to the overseas bases study: (1) Eventual nuclear disarmament should be the desideratum of American national security policy; the only real military threat to Western Europe was the threat of unintended conflict during a crisis over Berlin or Germany; vulnerable forces would indeed make catastrophe more likely in such a circumstance, but would be, on the other hand, much more adaptable to any proposed disarmament scheme; therefore the risk of accidental war should have been taken at least in the short run, the energies of the government then being devoted not to a build-up of military security but to extrication from the area of potential crisis through some kind of disengagement scheme. (2) Alternatively, the potential destructiveness of accidental war being too great to make such a risk bearable, the rationalization of our nuclear deterrent should have proceeded only to the extent of creating a secure *minimum* deterrent, not (as the RAND study came to signify)[35] as a first step toward the creation of

even tautological—depending, however, on what one means by "basic beliefs." My own suggestion is that such a phrase becomes highly normative if it is taken to mean anything more than the *words and symbols* that are considered legitimate as descriptions of the goals one seeks or the actions one undertakes. The "democratic creed" thus refers to no particular (i.e., operational) ends—except for those for whom the word "un-American" has an intimate meaning.

[34] Perhaps they have been beyond debate at RAND, for as I mentioned earlier, RAND has published no works calling any of those premises into question. And it has certainly sponsored no contributions to the growing literature of "cold-war revisionism," as represented by, for instance, Gar Alperovitz's *Atomic Diplomacy From Potsdam to Hiroshima* (New York 1965).

[35] The ultimate significance of the RAND bases study only became obvious to outsiders with the publication of Albert Wohlstetter's "The Delicate Balance of Terror," *Foreign Affairs*, XXXVII (January 1959), 211-34, which made quite clear that RAND theorists envisaged a secure deterrent as being both immense and multipurposed.

a nuclear force large enough to be an instrument of threats and policy in every cold-war (or hot-war) situation.[36]

If we assume now that by "public understanding" Smith refers to the understanding of those who belong to what Gabriel Almond calls the "attentive public"[37] and that "needed change" refers to change that history has made clear to *all* observers had to be undertaken, then we immediately see that by these standards RAND's contribution to the general welfare has been more questionable and controversial than Smith is willing to allow.[38] Nor is it a blessing under these circumstances that RAND's work has been free from "identification with partisan causes."[39] On the contrary, partisanship in social science may often be constructive, in that it immediately generates its own opposition and qualification, whereas a deep-rooted intellectual bias so broad and so pervasive that it is not even recognized may come to act as a damper on critical thought.

These remarks are not, of course, intended as a complaint about the sponsoring of "controversial" research by government; almost all research would so qualify by the standards implied above. Any government agency will and should do whatever it can (within certain bounds) to defend itself from attack and to improve its performance of its charged duties. What is at stake here are rather the attitude and responsibilities of scientists and scholars themselves: What should they do? What mode of participation in government is it appropriate for them to adopt?

Thus, RAND has chosen not to notice what is questionable in the work it is doing, rather than to ventilate thoroughly all the assumptions that go into its work; that choice in the end has helped narrow the range of options open to policy-makers. Returning to some of the

[36] Writers as diverse as James Warburg, Frederick L. Schuman, Walter Lippmann, and George F. Kennan disagreed with American European policy in whole or in part and questioned the premises on which it was based. On "minimum deterrence," see J. David Singer, *Deterrence, Arms Control, and Disarmament* (Columbus 1962). It must be remembered, incidentally, that Smith has chosen as his example of RAND's contribution what is certainly the best major RAND study; if he had chosen instead the work of Herman Kahn and his colleagues on civil defense—work that quite obviously took its logical cues from Wohlstetter's study—he would have had to defend the indefensible rather than merely ignore the controversial. (For an extended critique of the civil defense study see my *Deadly Logic*, chap. 2.)

[37] See Almond, 138.

[38] This is true even though one notes RAND's successes in the completely noncontroversial areas I have mentioned earlier. From a critical standpoint these successes would be viewed as residual benefits that do not balance the general costliness to American pluralism of RAND's operations; furthermore, there is no reason to believe that RAND or any similar organization was the *only* potential source of all the innovations that Smith attributes to it.

[39] See n. 28 above.

points I made earlier, we see, similarly, that RAND chose to operate under the auspices of the Air Force rather than, say, relevant congressional committees; that choice has affected the distribution of knowledge and know-how between democratically responsible (at least in part) and nonresponsible arms of the national government. RAND has chosen to lobby administratively rather than legislatively for its proposals; that choice has affected the distribution of power over national policy between those same arms of government. RAND has also chosen to do its work and its lobbying privately, rather than to thrash out its assumptions and analyses in the relevant intellectual community before presenting them to the Air Force; that choice has narrowed rather than extended the range of citizen participation in policy-making. And especially, RAND has chosen to do much of its work in a secrecy removed from all critical eyes in that intellectual community (Smith tells us in a footnote on page 158 that in the 1950's about half of RAND studies were classified); that choice has promoted an imbalance in know-how and knowledge between the military and the intellectual community.[40]

In the end, therefore, we must take as ironic Smith's comment that "the military services themselves, in sponsoring organizations like RAND, have greatly strengthened the civilian's role in defense management and policy formation" (p. 25). The price of that strengthening has been, as is often the case, the co-opting by government of a potentially independent group in the community. In 1947 the president of the Rockefeller Foundation remarked as follows (as quoted by Smith): "They [the military] were quite willing to accept civilians on a certain service level in the past. They used to say 'We like to have you around, and if you are awfully smart we will ask you questions and you will answer them as well as you can; but then we will go into another room and shut the door and make our decision.' That, in the past they were quite willing to do. Now, however, they want us in the backroom with them. They want to talk over the really fundamental questions, and they are actually admitting civilians at the planning level. That, I think, is very significant" (p. 35). To be admitted to "the backroom"—that

[40] I have not emphasized this point, but in a way Smith's refusal to deal with it is astonishing. Are scholarship and "creative research" at all compatible with secrecy? Are we to consider classified work a contribution to knowledge or simply, until it is made public, a fiction? Can a scholar or scientist accept the military's rationalizations for secrecy and remain true to his vocation? Perhaps there is a responsible argument to be made for mixing military secrecy with civilian research (though I have never seen one that was not merely self-serving on the part of the military), but surely the whole question deserves a chapter in a book such as Smith's, rather than relegation to a footnote.

has always been the carrot dangled in front of those whose services the proprietors of that room have wanted to co-opt. Perhaps this trade of independence for participation has been worthwhile from the perspective of a problematical democratic pluralism; perhaps not. In any event, Smith offers no aid toward the answering of that question.

We must also, finally, take as ironic Smith's comment about RAND's "long and arduous struggle" to sell its ideas to the Air Force: "The decision maker does not emerge here in the passive and largely reactive role that Sir Charles Snow portrays in *Science and Government.* Nor is it evident, if the present case is at all typical, that the cardinal decisions are always or even usually made by a 'handful of men.' There is opportunity for laborious dissection of advisory recommendations at various policy levels" (p. 238). Smith's own data show that the bases-study recommendations—and thus the outlines of American nuclear strategy for perhaps decades to come—were adopted through a process in which independent opinion elites and publics and democratically elected representatives had at best a token presence.

Finally, it bears repeating that such criticisms as these are not answered simply by postulating a beneficently working adversary system in social research and political influence. The adversary system in the courts has come under attack on the ground that its operations may hide a gross imbalance of resources between the opposing sides in a legal dispute. The same reasoning applies in the arena of power, and with even more stringency. There is no invisible hand; power is what people make of it, and RAND has helped to strengthen one kind of power in American society. If the host of imitators that have flourished in the wake of RAND's success have had the wherewithal or the opportunity or the will to balance that power, no evidence of their success is forthcoming in *The RAND Corporation*; nor has that essential question even been asked by Smith.

Looking back, then, on our earlier discussion, we can see that although RAND as an organization has had no effect on some of the obstacles to a genuine political pluralism in the United States, in other respects its effect has been considerable. The result of its activities has been to lessen (slightly) democratic control over policy; to aid in the continued parcelling out of public authority on an inequalitarian basis and in the exclusion of a substantial part of the intellectual community from access to the policy process; and in sum to narrow rather than enlarge the foreign policy-making elite, "the major [remaining] area of small-group control."

There have been, of course, extensive gains resulting from RAND's

activity. Determining their exact extent depends on one's perspective; but in any event they must be set against the political costs of that activity before a real appreciation of them is possible. And it must also be observed that there is as yet no reason to believe that the diversification of RAND's sources of support which is presently under way will correct all these tendencies of its operations. As far as we can tell, the private relationship with the Air Force has merely been replaced, where it has been, by the market test. Those who are capable of financing an expensive interdisciplinary study can hire RAND to do the work; neither Smith nor any spokesman for RAND has given reason to believe that some other criterion is being used to dispense RAND's services in the nongovernmental sector.[41] But the market test simply replicates in the economic arena what interest-group bargaining accomplishes in the political arena: a commitment to a spurious equality of opportunity that rewards the most those who possess the most of those resources on which political participation is based. Who will pay RAND to study how growers might be persuaded or coerced into recognizing a union of farm workers? Not, I think, the Ford Foundation.

The relationship of science and scientists to government—which is but one aspect of the broad question, How is social research actually financed?—is extremely complicated; so, therefore, must be the criteria by which that relationship is to be judged for appropriateness and propriety. If we reject, on the one hand, the uncritical notion that scientific work is morally and politically neuter and thus poses no problem and, on the other hand, the equally uncritical notion that science and government must or can maintain an absolute hands-off relationship, we then confront some extremely difficult questions about the proper role for scientific research to play in a democratic social order. The main task of those who study the activities of scientists in government must surely be to clarify those questions and to begin the search for answers. Al-

[41] For example, a recent major interdisciplinary study at RAND, published as *The Urban Transportation Problem*, by J. R. Meyer, J. F. Kain, and M. Wohl (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), was financed chiefly by a grant from the Ford Foundation. That study itself happens to be another excellent example of the limitations that seem built into the sophisticated methods RAND has developed. Meyer *et al.* compare auto and rail transportation and find the latter wanting on the whole; but they do not consider urban *air* transportation, which is especially important in the northeastern urban corridor. Thus they take no notice of the tremendous social and economic costs that air travel is causing; and they therefore fail to make the obvious observation that the auto can never compete with the airplane as a mode of interurban transportation, but the high-speed railroad can, and may be much cheaper. And as with RAND's strategic studies, I think the fault lies not so much with the practitioners of systems analysis but with the spurious value-neutrality of the method itself. One would have to *feel* the destruction caused by the auto and the airplane in combination—one would have to have that specific bias—in order to be led to that observation.

though that task cannot be accomplished unless the study of this narrow subject matter goes hand in hand with the larger study of democratic government, there is certainly a place for the detailed case study in this program: theory-building cannot proceed without data. But such studies will be less useful than they might otherwise be if, like *The RAND Corporation*, they allow the search for data to be dominated by an approach to the political system that obscures as much as it reveals.