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Arnold J. Meltsner

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*The practice and use of policy analysis has expanded throughout the United States. Yet, as part of our political system, policy analysis has been influenced by a set of recurring problems, problems of the policy process that involve both analysts and their clients. These problems are identified as "sins." Sinful policy analysis is channeled, distant, late, superficial, topical, capricious, and apolitical.*

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## ***The Seven Deadly Sins of Policy Analysis***

**ARNOLD J. MELTSNER**

*University of California, Berkeley*

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*Policy analysts are* an established part of our political system. Along with other advisers and policymakers, they work within a prevailing climate of suspicion about advising and government, and are not immune to a number of recurring problems of our policy process.

### ***Growth: Continuity and Change***

Well-trained technicians still come to Washington expecting that their knowledge will prevail, until they meet willful clients and the dynamics of politics. The organizational context, whether in an agency, the White House, or Congress, still provides routines and schedules that govern the character and production of analysis. Analysts, particularly the entrepreneurs, still try to anticipate problems, issues, and decisions. They still try to influence the agenda for analysis.

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The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) is a good example of this continuity in the behavior of analysts. Established as part of a new budgetary process, an offspring of the 1974 Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act, The CBO took hold in 1975 under the leadership of Alice M. Rivlin, a respected economist and policy analyst. The office began producing budget projections, estimates, and studies just about the time that the first edition of *Policy Analysts in the Bureaucracy* was in the publishing process.

As is the case with other analytical shops, Rivlin and her staff faced the problem of allocating their own scarce resources to influence the formulation of public policy, but at the same time to promote political support for the office itself. The analysts had to select problems so that their work could be part of the congressional debate. If a congressional committee was intending to consider, for example, food stamp legislation, then CBO's policy analyst had to anticipate the food stamp debate and be ready to provide information and studies. Moreover, one function of policy analysis is to point out problems that might otherwise be neglected, by providing early warning on emerging issues. In such a situation, the bureaucratic policy analyst tries to find a sponsor, a client for the required work, and CBO's analysts followed the same tactic. Rivlin, reflecting on her experiences as the former director of CBO to my class, recalled that when an analyst wanted to raise an issue, it was always possible to have a friendly member of Congress pose a question and ask for assistance on it.

To be sure, working in Congress is not the same as working in a federal agency. With 100 senators, 435 representatives, their staffs, and numerous committees, there are a multitude of clients to please. And these clients are subject to conflicting claims from party politics, local district needs, constituent requests, and interest group preferences. With these clients and their organizational context we should expect that analytical behavior in Congress would be somewhat different from the behavior of the bureaucratic policy analyst. The organizational context of Congress probably goes a long way to explain such behavior as CBO's deep concern with appearing objective and nonpartisan, its reluctance to make recommendations, and the efforts it takes to market and disseminate its work.

The definitive study of the practice of policy analysis in Congress awaits someone's doctoral dissertation. For now, let me draw a few tentative inferences about policy analysis in general. First, the practice and use of policy analysis depends heavily on the organizational

context, on the specific characteristics of the situation in which the analyst works. Second, besides continuity of behavior between analysts of different generations, there is also commonality of behavior among different organizational contexts. The first inference stresses differences in analytical behavior due to situations and their clients; the second undercuts the first by recognizing similarities due to shared educational backgrounds and socialization experiences.

The changes in analytical practice can be seen if we reflect a moment upon the features of our political system and the changes within it. We have been blessed by remarkable stability in our political system, and policy analysis, because of its currency as an informational resource, is very much a part of that system. The system with its emphasis on bargaining, adjustment, following the rules of the game, and policy decisions by coalitions is intact, despite the changes in specific institutions. To be sure, we have experienced a decline in our political parties and a rise of interest groups. Our courts do not seem just to make policy, but have gotten into the mess of implementing it. With the erosion of the rule of seniority, the growth of staff, the increase of subcommittees, and the lack of leaders who can deliver votes, Congress seems more diffuse and uncontrolled than ever. The presidency is still restrained, notwithstanding some of President Reagan's early successes at assembling majorities in Congress.

Most of the changes in our institutions run in a common direction. The changes tend to erode the centralizing and integrating mechanisms of our political system and substitute a fragmented set of separate policy islands that we term the *policy process*. Even the Reagan administration's putative ideology has not operated as a broad public philosophy creating a national consensus about issues and policy directions. One consequence of this lack of consensus and integration has been to increase the number of policymakers active in specific policy areas.

Given this increase in policymakers clustered around specific policy issues, what has happened to policy analysis? I do not think that its basic character has changed much at all; what has changed significantly is the quantity and extent of policy analysis activity. If I am right that the changes in our institutions have increased the number of active policymakers, then at least some of these will resort to policy analysts to facilitate the formulation and execution of public policy. More policymakers should create more clients for policy analysis. Different clients, not just bureaucratic ones, should make for some variation in analytical practice.

Along with the proliferation of clients, greater recognition of the partisan nature of policy analysis itself should come. Lacking a broad consensus for policy formulation, policymakers will increasingly perceive analysis as a partisan weapon. Narrowly defined, policy analysis is information that is directed to promote the interests and values of particular clients, whether that client is President Reagan, who is coping with the Soviet leader, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, or a senator, interested in clean air, who is coping with industrial air polluters. Broadly defined, a policy analysis may accommodate the interests of multiple clients, and when it can do so, it increases the viability of its policy recommendations. Such accommodation, however, does not prevent the partisan use of the analysis in subsequent policy debate. Even studies without recommendations are partisan, in a sense, because they may highlight particular definitions of problems.

In part, this partisan coupling of analyst and policymaker accepts that the debate, or the form of argumentation, in many policy areas is analytical. Environmental interest groups, for example, develop computer models to show the advantages of conserving energy to convince electric utilities and their regulators not to expand facilities. In the past, interest groups would try to influence policy outcomes, not only by financial largess, but by providing specific information on an issue. Today, interest groups are doing the same things, except the information includes the products of models and studies.

Fighting fire with fire, estimate against estimate, is very much a part of the current partisan analytical scene. Several decades ago, I noticed the same behavior in the Department of Defense. The first reaction to systems analysis by the services was that they did not do business that way. When they realized that Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara would make decisions, and did do business that way, the services quickly expanded their own analytical capability. Soon it was no longer a matter of whether to use a cost model, but whose cost model was likely to be perceived as more accurate. Each study was as objective as it could be within the constraints of one policymaker's definition and another policymaker's use.

When I first wrote this book, the term *policy analyst* was only beginning to be used. There were economists, planners, and systems analysts, but there was no civil service classification for policy analysts. Today, the identity, the name *policy analyst*, although not a household word, is well established. Reporters commonly speak of foreign and domestic policy analysts at the White House or in Congress. We have

health policy analysts and energy policy analysts. The designation is in general use, and has been extended to any staff person who sorts out options and evaluates consequences for policymakers.

Increased identity is tied to increased supply and demand for policy analysis. Each year, the various schools of public policy and public affairs are turning out hundreds of graduates who identify themselves as policy analysts. These graduates then find work as policy analysts in government, consulting firms, interest groups, and even businesses that are concerned about their social responsibility or coping with governmental regulation. From what I can see, there has not been a significant decline in employment opportunities for policy analysts, even in periods of cutback and deficit reduction.

I would like to believe that governmental policymakers understand the utility of policy analysts for guiding the trimming of the public sector, and would eagerly seek to hire them. After all, policy analysts are quite good at finding efficient solutions to public problems or emphasizing the need for increased performance and productivity. However, I suspect this is not the case, and it is mostly the nonprofit sector, interest groups, and other nongovernmental organizations that have taken up the slack and provided expanded opportunities for employment. Of course, not all parts of our federal system expand and contract at the same time; so government as an employer is still very much a part of the picture as, for example, with the expansion of analytical staff for some state legislatures and Congress.

As opportunities for policy analysts have increased in this country and elsewhere, and as policy analysts work in diverse places, we would expect differences in practice and behavior to emerge. In the United States, the effect of cultural and regional influences on the organizational context of policy analysis has yet to be studied. To the extent that schools of public policy and public affairs have a regional market for their graduates, differences in curricula might contribute to regional differences in practice. Although the schools share a problem-solving framework, they do not have a common curriculum. Some confine themselves to "hard" perspectives, such as economics and operations research; others emphasize "soft" perspectives, such as ethics and politics.

One counterweight to the lack of standardization, in teaching and probably in practice, was the formation of a professional organization, the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, in 1979. Its journal and annual research conferences have encouraged greater

exchange between practitioners and academics. With its association, journal, schools, and an increasing membership, we should no longer refer to policy analysis as an emerging profession. It has emerged with a defined identity, and is working toward standards of performance and practice.

### *A Climate of Suspicion*

Policy analysis and advising often take place in a climate of suspicion and distrust. Few talk about noble, self-effacing, almost saintly advisers; instead, we characterize them as something almost illegitimate, as gray eminences working in shadow governments, or as bureaucratic mandarins usurping the rightful functions of clients. Frequently, citizens perceive the White House staff, not their elected president, as running the country, and media coverage about a host of congressional assistants who stuff ideas into the heads of their respective senators and representatives, adds to the negative impression of usurpation by the nonelected.

This negative view of advisers comes about not only because they may be doing too much, but also because they seem to be doing too little. In the private sector, perennial arguments among line managers and staff analysts are usually based on differing notions of work, and the utility of that work to the company. In a severe cost squeeze, a company can live without its planners, at least to meet short-term, bottom-line situations. Teacher unions in bargaining sessions usually see the budgetary fat in the costs of administrative staff. Obviously, staff, planners, analysts, and advisers do not do anything useful. A similar sentiment was expressed by Tolstoy in *War and Peace* when the wily General Kútúsov exclaimed, "Advisers are always plentiful, but men are not." Men fight, it seems, and advisers—well, they just give advice.

All too often, policy analysts separate themselves from the broader context in which they are working. They will not see themselves as advisers, or if they admit that they do give advice in their studies, then they are only advisers with a little "a" and not advisers with a big "A." Of course, a policy analyst buried beneath organizational layers is different from the head of the Congressional Budget Office, or the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, or the National Security Adviser in the White House. If we can put aside such evident differences

as visibility and scope of policy concerns, then the similarities can emerge. Both little "a" and big "A" work on designing options, sorting out consequences, and coping with uncertain knowledge. More important, they both work in a prevailing context of suspicion about themselves and about government. This context goes beyond the usual mistrust of intellectuals and experts, but also includes the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate.

Is this lack of trust in analysts and what they do a problem for the participants in the policy process? Certainly, in a democracy skepticism is healthy. The difficulty comes about when trust is so worn away that the capacity to produce and to use quality advice is greatly reduced. We would prefer advice that is free of distortion and bias. We would prefer advice that has some scope and robustness to fit rapidly changing circumstances. Few of us would settle for advice that has some short-term gain but significant long-term loss. We do not want to win battles and lose wars.

Yet, the climate of suspicion does encourage the pursuit of short-term advantage or calculation so that there are errors in making policy decisions. When clients become distrustful of advising, they are likely to cut themselves off from new and fresh sources of information. They are likely to look for confirmation of preconceived ideas because they only trust themselves. If the president in the White House is suspicious of the bureaucracy in general, then appropriate advice that filters up through its system may be discounted. When analysts become distrustful, they are likely to be overly competitive, seeking advancement and protection for themselves. These analysts will tell the client what he or she wants to hear, and the corruption of advising, and distortion of information, cannot be far behind.

Such pathology is bound to have an effect on the performance of government. If these negative conditions would continue, we would expect that the citizens, the beneficiaries of public programs and actions, would withdraw their confidence in their leaders and government. Because the line between healthy skepticism and apathetic cynicism is so easily crossed, the performance of government must be protected and improved. Not only must we be concerned with the execution of public policies, but with the process by which the policies themselves are designed and accepted. Policy analysts should be particularly concerned, because they are part of this process of policy advising.

## *The Seven Deadly Sins*

Over the years, I have noticed that the process of policy advising often suffers from a set of recurring problems. We sometimes think of these problems as problems of quality. If only the client would have better analysts, then he or she would make better decisions. If the prime minister had a policy analysis office, then Great Britain's economy would be in better shape. Whatever the problem, good advice, or some structure to give good advice, would be the solution. Particularly in America, we love to tinker with our structures and institutions, so as to achieve improved information, decisions, and outcomes. Seldom do we recognize the difficulty in doing so. Indeed, the incentives encourage us not to recognize the difficulties, and push us instead to adopt the latest management gimmick—management by objectives, zero-based budgeting, or the holy acronym that will solve all: Improved Advice for Clients (IAC).

Before we can design an IAC, we have to recognize what is wrong. Of course, knowing what is wrong will not tell us what is good. But it is a start. So, I have developed a list of seven deadly sins. Sinful policy analysis is: channeled, distant, late, superficial, topical, capricious, and apolitical. These sins, or categories, are not mutually exclusive; they bleed into each other. One can try to fix one with the result of committing another. Advice that is too late for a decision, for example, has to be made more relevant, but if it is too relevant, it may also be too topical, too concerned with short-term events and payoffs. Nor is there anything so special about my list; those of us who are trained to find fault could easily add to the list or shift my examples to illustrate other sins. Despite these reservations, it is a list of sins that deserves attention, because at one time or another we, as policy analysts, have committed them.

### *Being in a Rut*

The sin of channeled advice means that the advice is in a rut, groove, or furrow. Locked into a solution, both analyst and client ignore that circumstances have changed, or that constraints exist. Sometimes the advice stays in a rut because of bureaucratic routines, such as the military using field manuals from World War II to plan present actions and future contingencies. A client can also contribute to the channeling

by insisting on inappropriate goals and beliefs. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara thought he could save money on procurement and operating expenses by buying a common plane for the services. Although the belief in commonality is probably appropriate to automobile production and procurement, it was inappropriate for what turned out to be the expensive and less than satisfactory TFX (F-111). Yet, McNamara stayed in his rut while the Air Force and Navy stayed in theirs, insisting on their individual requirements, and following through on their procurement folkways.

Sometimes, the sin of channeled advice comes about because of the political and intellectual climate. That was certainly the case in the decade following the passage of Medicare and Medicaid. The majority of health experts, inside and outside of government, pushed for some form of national health insurance as a natural extension of previous legislation. Their efforts focused on *which* form of national health insurance was needed, in terms of coverage, financing, and administration; few questioned the assumptions that the country needed some form of national insurance. Both analysts and clients stayed comfortably in their channel until the reality of rapidly escalating health care costs caught up with them and their thinking.

### *Too Far Away*

The sin of distant advice is that it is based on ignorance; it is not grounded in reality. The analyst does not have to be a utopian to commit the sin—just far away enough from immediate reality to have no audience, or to misjudge the application of his or her advice. Policy analysts all too often come up with general solutions for very specific conditions. Our training in the social sciences seems to encourage a bit too much confidence in the power of theory and data analysis. It is not surprising that the analysis of aggregate data does not always fit the conditions and individuals at the point a policy is applied. Yet, we are continually amazed that the advice cooked up in Washington does not square with the reality of San Antonio, Texas. Surely by now, we ought to recognize the complexity that sheer geography creates in our federal system.

The sin of distant advice is not only caused by geography. Policy advising can be distant in a number of senses: the theory and underlying conceptions of causation can be too global, or too refined; the chosen

variables may make for neat statistical explanations, but be divorced from actual policy levers or from immediate policy issues. At the very least, the client should be informed as to whether the situation or problem is susceptible to his or her intervention. Instead of close and manipulable causation that should be inherent in policy advice, the client is likely to get distant advice, advice that is likely to result in implementation problems, or in displacing the problem on to some other client, or in making it appear that something can be done when it cannot.

I recall a policy analyst who was evaluating several social programs and thought it was appropriate to offer recommendations based solely on available performance numbers without going to the field. He thought it was a waste of his time to examine the actual operation of the programs. Obviously, in foreign policy situations, where reliable information is hard to obtain, the analyst may inadvertently commit this sin, but what is the excuse of the domestic policy analyst who can easily find out the facts but does not want to do so?

### *Forget the Policy Process*

“The policy process makes harsh requirements on its participants.” An analyst may be late to his or her wedding, but must be on time when advice is wanted. Yet so much advice is simply too late to be used. Late advice is truly a sin because of the waste. It is information that no one wants at the time. Like advice that is too early, late advice floats around hoping for someone to use it.

The tyro is usually cautioned to be on time and to make sure that his or her work fits the timing requirements of the policy process. Although developing good work habits can do much to alleviate the problem, it is not the whole story. Sometimes the analyst, in wanting to get one more fact or in checking one more number, decides to risk being late to pursue being precise. Who can argue with such dedication? Is not accuracy and truth a virtue?

To make an appropriate decision as to the balance between accuracy and being on time, the analyst needs to understand the situation that confronts the client. Is it the kind of situation in which it is essential to have some rough insights early in the process, or some carefully considered reflections later on? Is there some play in the timing of the decision? The sin of late advice frequently comes about when the analyst

is ill informed about the client's situation and the client has not taken sufficient steps to correct the analyst's perceptions. Somehow, consumers and producers of advice get unhinged and separated. Neither seem to appreciate the situation of the other.

Typically, one client asks for some advice and then is replaced by another client who has no need for it. No doubt many contracted studies are wasted simply because of the game of musical chairs that goes on in public and private organizations. A visible, and sometimes embarrassing, example occurs when the adviser is a presidential commission that is appointed by one president but submits its report to another. That was the case when President Nixon received the message that pornography was not as bad as he and his supporters thought. Perhaps President Johnson would not have liked the message either, but because the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography was not one of Nixon's offspring, it was easier for President Nixon to separate himself from its findings.

### *Know Too Little*

Sometimes the advice is too quick, too off-the-cuff, and not based on enough digging into the roots of the problem, and that is when the sin of superficial advice is committed. I once worked for a person who had the reputation of being the best superficial mind in Washington. There is a hint of criticism in such a remark, but there is also a kind of admiration that testifies to the prevailing incentives of the policy process. Unfortunately, acceptance of advice for both clients and analysts is much more important than the appropriate selection, definition, and analysis of a problem.

All too often, clients and analysts are inclined to fire the head of a department, as if that action alone will fix what is wrong with the organization. "Let the new boss find out what is wrong," is the motto of busy clients and their analysts. After all, they will not be around to discover that the organizational problems persist and seem to be independent of the person who is supposed to be in charge. Most reorganization studies suffer from superficial analysis. The client wants to reorganize, so the analysts shuffle boxes without much motivation to discover the costs of the reorganization, or to ascertain whether the shuffling will enhance productivity and the capability to perform. President Carter, for numerous reasons, wanted to have a separate

department of education, and so with some effort it came to pass. Now, President Reagan does not want a separate department and would like to change things back again. Both of these clients and their analysts cloaked these changes in the garments of efficiency. But this is nonsense, because the same action and its reverse cannot both be efficient.

What annoys me about the sin of superficiality in the case of reorganizations studies is that it deflects the attention of the client, and it displaces the effort of the analyst. Superficial solutions interfere with appropriate diagnosis and the hard work necessary to achieve sensible policies. Certainly, we want to enhance the learning and potential of our children. We want to know how to do better at the mystery of teaching. The relationship of a federal reorganization to local school performance is at best tangential, if not nonexistent. The road to unintended consequences and high employment for policy analysts is paved with superficial advice.

### *Excessive Reactions*

The fifth deadly sin is topical advice. All too often, the demand for advice stems from some sort of crisis or manufactured crisis—an airplane crash, DNA experimentation may be out of control, masses of people may die of swine flu. The crisis leads to a kind of a firehouse mentality, advice on the run. As such, the analyst is likely to provide superficial and distant advice. Analysts may do this without the excuse of a crisis, but a crisis makes it acceptable. Putting aside these sins, there are still problems with topical advice. When clients and analysts keep reacting to perceived crises, they are likely to lose control of their agenda. How often is it said in foreign policy that the president is just reacting to external events and does not have a policy?

An organization that relies only on reacting may lose its future. Without some measure of anticipation, a business, for example, can be preempted from an important emerging market. Topical advice concentrates on the salient and palpable, and so it should. We want our clients to be responsive to relevant events, and we want them to have the necessary information to do so. But we do not want them to do only that because we expect to live in the future as well as the present. Therefore, we want them to pay attention to the less visible problems and issues. We do not want analysts to ignore an issue just because it is less visible and has not assumed crisis proportions.

Thus, the main trouble with topical advice is that it crowds out other less pressing advice. The client is too busy dealing with the daily crisis, and the analyst has to help. A wise client and analyst, therefore, will correct this defect in decision making, not by appointing a useless advanced planning unit, but by selecting some future issues for immediate attention. A mayor, for example, could point out that past years of neglect of sewers and roads has created a "crisis" in public works that will affect public health and safety unless something is done. That too few public officials have done so is confirmed by the invisibility of a major capital replacement problem in this country. Evidently, these officials are too busy dealing with present problems and topical advice.

### *Change for Its Own Sake*

The sin of capricious advice is not quite the same as the topical one. What I have in mind is the bias in advice to change things. We lack enough incentives in policymaking to say just leave it alone. Both analysts and their clients keep looking for changes. I realize that much of the organizational context of the client and analyst is devoted to maintaining routines and the way things are. But in trying to counteract this organizational inertia, we may not let things gel enough to learn something. It is difficult to evaluate a program if we do not let it operate for a while.

Consider our primary and secondary schools. I am probably telescoping things, but I cannot remember a time when someone was not criticizing them and someone else was not suggesting a panacea. Not knowing the relationship of what we do to what we want to see happen, schools have been subjected to all sorts of teaching fads and methods. Just when the schools are about to return to some sort of equilibrium, they are confronted with one more commission report and one more change in direction. It is not just money that teachers need, we also have to stop hassling them and undermining their mental health with capricious advice.

Of course, clients cannot spend their entire time in office being content. Some policymaking activity is essential for maintaining support and approval. Advisers, for their part, have to suggest something in order to keep their jobs or to advance; they cannot just keep saying leave it alone. Despite the incentives for change, clients and analysts have to be sensitive to the consequences of capricious advice and head off the gross foolishness before it starts.

*Advice Without Politics*

The final sin is apolitical advice. By this I mean that political advice is not appropriately linked or integrated with the substantive advice of policy. Clients, particularly those who have just gone through an election, insist on being told what is right and want to leave the political judgment to themselves. Advisers, particularly technicians, for their part, insist that there are correct answers and have been educated to believe that politics is irrational, something outside the boundaries of expert discourse. Thus, a peculiar division of labor arises in which we have experts who give policy advice and different experts who give political advice. Sometimes the client can integrate these two sources of information, but more often than not the client ends up being embarrassed.

A case in point is when President Carter wanted to have his analysts reform the welfare system without paying attention to political constraints. His idea was that welfare could be reformed without spending additional money, and his analysts worked very hard to give him what he wanted, knowing full well that what he wanted was not politically viable. The proposed reform never got anywhere and became one more example of Carter's inability to function in the Oval Office.

Often rulers and clients are surrounded by analysts who usually suggest policies that cannot stand the test of legislative approval and executive implementation. What good does it do for the analyst to suggest, for example, deregulation of natural gas if the analyst has not thought of a practical way of doing so? Worse yet is the analyst who believes that anyone can give political advice and offers ready opinions without any investigation or testing of the prevailing political wisdom.

Maintaining a political perspective in policy advising, by both client and analyst, is essential; otherwise, important opportunities may be lost. A few years ago in Zambia, the citizens beat up a village chief because the population of crocodiles was increasing and attacking the citizens almost daily. The citizens wanted the chief to get the government to do something about the problem. At the same time, the government in Lusaka was considering breeding crocodiles so the skins could be sold for foreign exchange. The problem for Lusaka was to get crocodiles off the endangered species list and then to establish breeding farms; the problem at the village level was to get rid of the crocodiles, or at least control the growth of its population. I do not know what happened, but here was an excellent political opportunity.

If the government could have incorporated the local village's need for crocodile control in their foreign exchange plans, it would have earned the support and allegiance of the local citizens and contributed to the stability of the political system. The example may be a bit farfetched, but consider for a moment how our own general attitudes about the performance of government are conditioned by the efficiency, or lack of it, of daily mail delivery. Rulers have to consider not only the immediate operational aspects of a policy—whether the solution meets the requirements of the specific problem—but the broader significance of the policy as well. To do so requires that political understanding be integrated with policy substance, not just from rulers, but also from their advisers.

In Western countries, we have elevated the separation of knowledge and power to a matter of high principle. We create civil service systems, illusions of governance, and fictions that uninformed political masters direct and control neutral experts. We say our civil servants should be apolitical. We teach our experts that science and politics do not mix. We do all these things, and then wonder why clients and their analysts make policy blunders. We are so afraid that the analyst will usurp the client's function that we ignore that the client needs help in determining whether a policy is appropriate for governmental action, in developing a consensus and understanding of political feasibility, and in addressing the enduring matters of the maintenance of the state and its public philosophy.

*ARNOLD J. MELTSNER is Professor at the Graduate School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley. His published works include Policy Analysts in the Bureaucracy (1986).*