
POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Adversary forums, when properly structured, can promote the evaluation of expert opinion, generate debate, and further the tradition of public dialogue on policy issues. "Public adversary processes offer the best hope for a democratic alternative to 'presumptive validity,'" says Casper, who proposes such techniques for congressional hearings (where opposing experts now rarely confront each other) and on television as a public service.

Although such a mechanism might improve the quality of information provided to the public, its effects may be inconsequential if the decision-making process itself is not substantially altered. Casper sees two problems which must be overcome: The lack of "accountability" and the regrettable fact that long-range federal planning for technology is currently dominated "by alliances of bureaucrats in federal agencies, technocrats in industry and government laboratories, and their congressional patrons."

Zero-Basing the Georgia Budget

"A Look at Zero-Base Budgeting—The Georgia Experience" by George S. Minnier and Roger H. Hermanson, in *Atlanta Economic Review* (July-Aug. 1976), School of Business Administration, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Ga. 30303.

In contrast with traditional "incremental" budgeting systems, zero-base budgeting requires budget planners to "start from zero" by identifying anew each year every function of each government agency and the costs associated with each.

Governor Jimmy Carter introduced zero-base budgeting to Georgia in 1972 and predicted that the procedure would soon be copied throughout the nation. Accounting professors Minnier and Hermanson, of Georgia State University's School of Business Administration, studied the Georgia experience and, in terms of more effective government, concluded that "zero-base budgeting appears to have served the best interests of the state."

Their interviews with state government department heads, however, revealed varying degrees of dissatisfaction with the system, chiefly because of an apparent lack of say in the decision to implement it. Of 13 department heads interviewed (in 1974), only two indicated strong support for zero-base budgeting and none could provide an instance in which the new budgeting system had reallocated money in their own departments. Carter argued that the reallocation of funds was largely due to his Executive Reorganization Act of 1972 but that "the detection of need for consolidating similar functions within state government" came from zero-base budgeting.

Overall, the authors conclude, zero-base budgeting in Georgia provides improved financial planning prior to budget preparation, higher

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

quality management information, and increased involvement of personnel "at the activity level" in the state's budgeting process. The major disadvantage is the added time and effort required for budget preparation.

Lifetime Legislators

"The Essential Reform" by David Lebedoff, in *Harper's* (Oct. 1976), 2 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.

Our present system of congressional reapportionment is a disaster, says Lebedoff, a Minneapolis lawyer and treasurer of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota. By leaving reapportionment to be determined by state legislatures, single-party rule in every district is virtually assured.

"The result is a Congress in which nearly every seat is permanently safe," Lebedoff argues. (In 1972, despite the biggest presidential landslide in recent history, only three per cent of incumbent seats in the House were lost.) With little real chance for partisan contest, political parties atrophy. One-party dominance of congressional districts has put the House of Representatives out of touch with the people and eager to avoid tough decisions that can be ducked with impunity. The controversial issues (abortion, busing) have gone to the federal courts by default.

Thanks to this system, "we are burdened with lifetime legislators, whose tenure is threatened only by senility, death, or scandal," writes Lebedoff. "They can fudge and avoid and delay all they want, and not be held accountable."

His solution? Take congressional reapportionment away from the state legislators and give it to a federal reapportionment board with a general mandate to avoid single-party dominance.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

*Triangular
Asymmetry*

"Trilateralism: 'Partnership for What?'" by Richard H. Ullman, in *Foreign Affairs* (Oct. 1976), 428 East Preston Ct., Baltimore, Md. 21202.

"Trilateralism" is the fashionable word among those American specialists (e.g., Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski, Columbia professor and former director of the Trilateral Commission) who believe that closer coordination among the United States, Japan, and Western Europe in dealings with the communists and the Third World can help resolve many of America's foreign-policy problems in the 1970s.