

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Navy, nutrition programs for low-income mothers—takes place without somebody citing a public-policy study,” Rivlin writes.

She believes that such specialists, deployed throughout the government bureaucracies, have vastly improved the day-to-day management of programs. They can be instrumental in forging new policies. Without analysts’ computer print-outs, for example, the bipartisan presidential commission appointed in 1982 to fashion a rescue plan for the Social Security system would have been hard put to complete its work.

Policy analysis does have its limits. For one thing, the multitude of studies churned out by specialists, many written in maddeningly arcane jargon, simply overload legislators. Moreover, such analyses often reveal just how complicated a problem really is. And analysts’ prescriptions are always subject to error. It all adds up to frustration for the recipients. Too often, Rivlin says, they either succumb to paralysis or, going to the opposite extreme, plump for unrealistically simple solutions.

In her view, that is how Congress and the White House got the nation into today’s budgetary fix—cutting taxes and boosting spending despite ample warnings of trouble. No amount of policy analysis, Rivlin concludes, can overcome human reluctance to face facts.

The Best Things in Politics Are Free

“The Power of the Primary Purse: Money in 1984” by Michael J. Robinson, in *Public Opinion* (Aug.-Sept. 1984), American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-9964.

Money makes the world go ’round, especially the political world. Or so the conventional wisdom would have it. In fact, argues Robinson, a George Washington University political scientist, in presidential election campaigns, “he who spends more does not necessarily do better.”

Robinson cites last year’s Democratic presidential primaries to support his argument. Walter Mondale, the biggest overall spender (\$18 million), did indeed finally claim the nomination. But things look different when individual primaries are inspected: The biggest spenders won in only 10 of 29 primary contests. In New Hampshire, for example, candidate John Glenn outspent both Gary Hart and Mondale but still came in third. Later, when the race had narrowed to just Hart and Mondale, the Colorado Senator’s upstart candidacy was fatally damaged by defeats in New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas—states where he outspent his rival by 2 to 1. (The April 3, 1984, New York race was the most expensive, costing Hart \$1.2 million and Mondale \$554,000.)

“Money did matter once upon a time,” says Robinson. But under the federal campaign spending ceilings imposed in 1974, no presidential candidate can bury his rivals with dollars. He also discounts the value of TV advertisements, which consume the lion’s share of most campaign war chests. The typical American sees some 10,000 TV ads every year and “is well beyond the point at which commercials could deter-

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mine a presidential preference." Far more important than paid TV time are candidates' day-to-day performances on the stump under the scrutiny of local print and TV journalists and in such forums as televised debates and talk shows.

Why, then, do candidates spend so much time and energy raising money? One reason, suggests Robinson, is that, in the eyes of the all-important reporters and pundits, "raising and spending money has become a bizarre test of the seriousness of a candidacy."

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Up in Arms

"The Case against Arms Control" by Seymour Weiss, in *Commentary* (Nov. 1984), 165 East 65th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Most Americans believe that accords with the Soviets on nuclear arms control are, in general, good and necessary. Weiss, a retired U.S. diplomat, emphatically disagrees.

"Just what evidence exists," he asks, "that recent nuclear arms limitations agreements with the USSR have actually contributed to U.S. security?" In his view, none. The United States enjoyed clear nuclear superiority over the Soviets during the 1960s; today, the Soviets are ahead "both in fact and in the perception of most of the world."

Agreements such as the 1972 SALT I pact and the (never ratified) 1979 SALT II agreement required virtually no force reductions by either side but established upper limits on expansion. Moscow built as many missiles as it was allowed (and more, if allegations of its treaty violations are true); the United States failed to keep pace. The relaxed attitudes bred in Washington by arms agreements made it hard to win congressional funding for new U.S. weapons. As former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown put it, "When we build, they build; when we cut, they build."

Does not arms control at least save money? Not really, Weiss argues. He points to the 1972 Antiballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. The ban on all but limited defenses against nuclear missiles did spare the United States the immediate expense of installing an ABM system that would have cost \$10 billion or more. But today Washington faces the prospect of spending many times that sum to build the MX missile, needed to reduce U.S. vulnerability to a Soviet first strike.

Then perhaps just talking with the Kremlin leadership would be worthwhile? Wrong again, writes Weiss. British prime minister Neville Chamberlain met many times with Adolph Hitler, "but proximity did not breed a general comprehension of reality. Conversely, Winston Churchill required no intimate contact to perceive the truth."