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Review of: Science Advice to the President (William T. Golden, ed. AAAS Press 2d Ed. 1993).

Timothy Van Dyke

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Erratum

The citation for this review is 7 *RISK* 385 (1996) in most commercial databases.

Science Advice to the President (William T. Golden, ed. AAAS Press 2d Ed. 1993). Acknowledgments, index of names, introductions, notes, tables. ISBN 0-87168-509-4 [340 pp. \$29.95 paper. American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1333 H St. NW, Washington DC 20701.]

Dr. Golden has compiled a set of essays that examine issues involved in providing useful science information to policy makers and, more specifically, the relationship of science and technology to political office. The authors represent a surplus of experts, including the present science advisor and all former ones since the Truman Administration, as well as former President Ford himself.

A central premise is that science has extraordinary power and influence and should be a vital factor in presidential as well as congressional policy-making. This is probably best illustrated by William G. Wells' essay:¹

In a very brief time science has proved itself an incredibly powerful revolutionary force which has swiftly and dramatically affected society's beliefs and values, created and destroyed industries, revolutionized war, transformed and overturned political and social organizations, and modified man's conception of his place in the universe.

In regard to the politician's role, he quotes Eisenhower:²

"[I]t is the task of statesmanship to mold, to balance, and to integrate these and other forces... within the principles of our democratic system — ever aiming toward the supreme goals of our free society."

Thus, the book's main focus is exploring the most effective way of encouraging presidents to seek, consider, evaluate and use scientific and technological advice. It provides, too, an analysis of how the less than smooth relationship between science advisors and presidents has evolved and suggests paths it should take in the future.

Science Advice to the President seems to be written for present and future presidents, members of congress, career civil servants, educators and others directly concerned with the social effects of rapid technology growth and its management by government. It may also be of particular interest to funded university researchers. For example, the

¹ At 254.

² At 255.

essay by Gerald Piel³ gives an interesting analysis of the current state of basic and applied science research funding, the direction it is heading and a proposal to maintain its well-being. Finally, with close attention, even casual readers should have little difficulty exploring the important area the book addresses.

Since the first edition was published in 1980, only a few articles have been added. Many older articles argue for reestablishing the President's Science Advisory Committee. Because President Bush did exactly that in 1989 and President Clinton has continued it, the argument has already been won. Nevertheless, a thorough discussion of recurring issues provides an excellent framework for assessing its continuing viability.

Timothy Van Dyke[†]



³ At 205.

[†] Mr. Van Dyke received a B.S. (Biology) from the University of Florida and a M.S. (Microbiology) from the University of South Florida. He is a candidate for the J.D. at FPLC.