

study of interstate politics which embraces a dozen disciplines ranging from law, economics, and history to psychology, philosophy, and military science. The study of interstate politics should never aspire to be a "pure science" any more than history, philosophy, or theology, though all of these more inclusive disciplines should obviously be instructed by a mood of skepticism and should observe rigorous standards of self-criticism and verification where verification is possible. The humanities and the disciplines of interstate politics should eschew quantification and prediction.

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What contribution can the policy sciences or humanities make to the harassed President or lesser policy maker? On specific questions of fact, particular disciplines or research efforts can be helpful. Even intangible factors, such as the political and psychological predispositions of a particular ruling elite, can sometimes be empirically ascertained. But no conclusive answers can be given, no sure advice, because in a grave crisis the President will always be confronted by a number of indeterminate factors.

In the Cuba missile crisis, how many dependable facts did President Kennedy have on the important questions? Very few. Like all statesmen, he made educated guesses and took educated risks. Perhaps the most important factor was the unquantifiable and unpredictable behavior of a handful of men in Moscow who had the capacity to visit catastrophic destruction upon the United States. What the President needed most was political wisdom. And research—soft or hard—cannot provide this. He talked to trusted persons. He consulted scientists, military men, intelligence specialists, lawyers, and Soviet experts. All this to inform his judgment.

As far as I know, President Kennedy did not consult any member of the decision-making cult, i.e., one who believes that with further research, scholars will eventually be able to predict the behavior of statesmen in crises if all the relevant facts are known and properly assessed. The assumption that all relevant factors can be known and given their proper weight is arrogant nonsense. A crisis is a crisis precisely because all relevant factors cannot be known, and if they could, who but Almighty God could "properly" assess them?

Perhaps the two most relevant disciplines to the art of politics are history and philosophy—philosophy in the classic sense of Plato, Aristotle, and St. Augustine, where politics and ethics are joined along with a shrewd understanding of the moral ambiguity of man. Our Founding Fathers got along quite well

because they were steeped in the humanities and James Madison, at least, was influenced by John Calvin. Has the wisdom of the *Federalist Papers* been surpassed in recent American political writing?

To assert the primacy of political wisdom in politics, specifically in national security policy, is not to demand or degrade technical or policy research, both of which have an important role in informing the "attentive public," including "men of affairs" and men in government, and hence have a long-range effect upon the direction and quality of foreign policy. Occasionally research may bear directly and constructively on a serious crisis, but this is not likely. More often research can be drawn upon to help solve a specific problem before it reaches the crisis stage. But even here, the facts and insights of the scholar are only a part of the data the policy maker must take into account.

For the most part, sound research will contribute to that reservoir of knowledge and insight upon which all responsible statesmen draw when they make the momentous decisions of war and peace.

correspondence

"Old Year Out, New Year In"

New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir: In the issue of *worldview* of January, 1969, which came belatedly to my attention, Mr. Edmund Stillman writes:

"After all, it was not so long ago that serious political critics of official policy (among them Hans Morgenthau and the editorial board of the *New York Times*) held that the real folly of the Vietnam war was not that it involved the United States in an unwinnable contest in which its real interests were only problematically engaged, but that it risked escalating to an ultimate nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union."

I have long since been inured to misrepresentations of my point of view, but this account is so utterly and obviously false that I must set the record straight. From the moment I first warned against our involvement in Vietnam ("Asia: The American Algeria," July, 1961); ("Vietnam: Another Korea," May, 1962); to this day ("Bundy's Doctrine of War Without End," November, 1968) I have consistently taken the position which Mr. Stillman says I have not taken, i.e., that the Vietnam war is militarily unwinnable, politically aimless and morally dubious and that the issues at stake do not bear on the vital interest of the United States.

Hans J. Morgenthau