

## Political Scientist Responds to Practitioner

While browsing through the September 1992 issue I stopped to read "Practitioners and Political Scientists" by Dale Herspring. While I strongly endorse the effort to bring the scholar and the practitioner into closer collaboration, I can only lament the epistemological innocence of so many of the latter.

First, the author tells us that "there has been an explosion in theory" in IR (*infra-red*, information retrieval, international relations?) since *Politics among Nations*. Both sides of the discussion are harmed when we use "theory" to describe polysyllabic speculation or off-the-wall hunch. Why not adhere to higher semantic standards and restrict "theory" to a body of codified knowledge.

Second, to label our work under the Correlates of War here at Michigan as "the inductive approach" is accurate, but incomplete. The great bulk of research by historians and traditional political scientists is inductive in that it pays close attention to the empirical-historical facts. But most of that work is also pre-operational in that the classification or scaling of these facts is largely intuitive and idiosyncratic, with no specification of the coding and classifying and scaling criteria and the operations by which we include, exclude, or measure.

Third, Herspring suggests that the findings of projects such as COW "sound silly to the practitioner." This is indeed all too true, but the fault is often a function of the latter's indifference to the long haul and a preoccupation with the immediate past and future. Neither I nor John Vasquez in his 1987 review of our findings would contend that the generalizations that emerge will *always* hold true; in every scientific investigation, there will be a distribution of outcomes. Furthermore, if

there were not differences in the predictor and outcome variables in a given study, there would be no variation to be accounted for—and that, of course, is the name of the game in scientific research.

In sum, there is plenty of room for serious disagreement over research methods, not to mention the interpretation of our findings. But there is no excuse for this sort of semantic imprecision and epistemological ignorance, be it on the part of academics, practitioners, or our patrons.

J. David Singer  
*University of Michigan*

## Response to Kinnucan

The September 1992 *PS* article by Michael J. Kinnucan, "Political Economy and Militarism," which makes extensive reference to our 1989 *PS* article, "Socialism and Militarism," is a welcome improvement over the overheated blather that accompanied the appearance of our article several years ago. The appendix, listing armed conflicts, 1945-1989, by nation, merits publication, even at the price of wading through a swamp of Marxist polemics. However the central measure, number of "involvements," is fatally flawed. First, every "involvement" receives the same score. Thus, the American intervention in Guatemala in 1954 is equal to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, which lasted ten years and killed tens of thousands of people. The Khmer Rouge's massive, almost incomprehensible, massacre is scored identically with the French suppression of riots in 1968. The use of the 1968 French case is surprising on another ground. The author defines an armed conflict, the dependent variable, as "any politically motivated act or series of related acts that results in the violent death of 1000 or more persons." Does Kinnucan seriously suggest that the

French riots in 1968 meet this criterion? *No* lives were lost! If the French riots are an example of the care with which Mr. Kinnucan records his evidence, what are we to think of the rest of it?

Surely a system that assigned weights (deaths, time, number of troops?) would be preferable. Second, open societies get "docked" for the repression of "civil insurrection" while closed ones, who do not tolerate unrest, come out OK. While he gives the U.S. a point for its repression of civil insurrection, 1963-1971, he does not give one to the USSR, which at the time was imprisoning dissenters in psychiatric hospitals, and torturing them with mind altering drugs. Finally, there are scattered examples of puzzling decisions on Kinnucan's part: China receives scores *both* for the KMT executions on Taiwan *and* the invasion of Tibet; Cuba's civil war against Batista earns this nation a "point" as does its intervention in Ethiopia. In both these cases, the "bad guys" damage the record of their successors, which does not seem fair. We suggest that Kinnucan's numbers be the starting point for a more sensitive effort.

As to Kinnucan's earlier point, that the nations classified by us as socialists are failed deviations from Lenin's pure dream and are not "really" socialist, we suggest that we call them "countries that, until recently, conspicuously displayed statues of Lenin." Like all who wish for human betterment, we await, and await, and await, the coming of the true socialist utopia.

Thomas R. Dye  
*Florida State University*

Harmon Zeigler  
*University of Puget Sound*

## American Political Science Association Annual Meeting Discount Airfares to Washington, DC

United Airlines, USAir and Travel Resources have been selected to serve as the official air travel coordinators for the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting to be held in Washington, DC from September 2-5, 1993.

Travel Resources will guarantee the lowest airfare from your home city to Washington, DC. To reserve your flight to Washington, DC, please call the **Travel Resources Convention Desk** toll free at **(800) 638-8427** or **(301) 294-9131**. Tell the agent that you are attending the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, and give the special identification code: **GR 290402**. The earlier you make your reservations, the better chance you have to secure the best airfare. In addition to United and USAir, the official carriers, low airfares are available also on all major carriers including American, America West, Delta, Northwest, TWA and others.

Tickets will be issued by Travel Resources and mailed to your home or office. You can use any one of your major credit cards for payment or ask that Travel Resources prebill you.

In addition, each attendee will receive through Travel Resources:

- \* \$150,000 flight insurance
- \* Headset coupons on USAir
- \* Washington, DC airport arrival information
- \* Seat Assignments and Boarding Passes
- \* Credit for Frequent Flyer Mileage
- \* Opportunity to win two roundtrip airline tickets



You will NOT receive all of these services if the airline ticket is issued by another travel agency or by the airline itself.

Reference the APSA Annual Meeting when you use our official agency, Travel Resources, to make your reservation. We urge you to call:



**TRAVEL RESOURCES**

**(800) 638-8427 or (301) 294-9131**