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May 15, 2004

Dr. Susanne Hoerber Rudolph, President
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&

Dr. Margaret Levi, President-elect
American Political Science Association
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PO Box 353530 - 145 Gowen
Seattle, WA 98195-0001

Dear Dr. Rudolph and Dr. Levi:

I am writing to suggest that APSA designate its Vice Presidents as Chairs of working groups to develop research resources for the profession. To coordinate the effort, I also suggest that APSA underwrite 50% released time and expenses for our Development Committee Chairman (Dr. Henry Brady) to develop and implement a lobbying strategy for new initiatives in the \$10 million - \$100 million range (defined as "midrange" by NSF).

I am writing against a background of more than a decade of work by our foundation (created by Harold Lasswell and his associates) to develop new resources for a problem-oriented social science. And also because the federal government has underway a major high-level review of its support for the behavioral sciences, being chaired by Dr. Susan Brandon, Assistant Director in Dr. Marburger's office.

In Washington, the norm is that major increases of scientific funding require specific projects to: 1.) acquire new data, 2.) address urgent problems, and/or 3.)

solve important theoretical disputes. The National Science Board (NSF) expects to spend about \$16 billion+ for new “infrastructure” initiatives across the next decade (i.e., to build collective resources for fast discovery science) and is especially interested in these “midrange” (\$10 million - \$100 million) initiatives. To receive approval as a collective investment, new proposals must be vetted and forwarded from one of three legitimating mechanisms: a.) a National Academy of Sciences/ National Resource Council agenda-setting project; b.) a section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; or c.) a disciplinary society. And there must be sustained and personal advocacy by scientists at research universities.

I hope that Dr. Brady already has been on a plane to Washington to meet with Dr. Brandon and open a channel of communications. If not, I hope that this letter can serve as encouragement, and give him the support that he needs to develop and coordinate an effective lobbying strategy for good ideas. If Dr. Brady’s leadership and support from APSA Vice Presidents can secure an additional \$100 million over the next decade, or even a fraction of that amount, it would be a cost-effective investment.

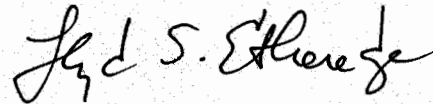
Our foundation has sketched a range of such initiatives for Dr. Brandon, which I enclose. For our discipline, they are collective goods: The formal proposals that might develop from these early drafts, and from independent ideas that could be forthcoming if our Vice Presidents and Dr. Brady can help with leadership and lobbying, could (like the development of the Hubble telescope) support fast discovery science, intellectual vitality, and productivity, in many fields of political science. However, the processes to bring them to life require a budget and national standing that are beyond what our foundation can provide.

Any scientific field is within one generation of extinction (or regressing to scholasticism). There must be the intellectual vitality and research support to enroll and retain the next generation of leading scientists. I am not sure that we are doing the best job that we can.

I will attach a summary of nine proposed strategies and also will enclose the relevant background material, so that you can see what has gone forward. I also enclose a letter to Dr. Brandon of April 4, 2004 concerning a broad strategy - which also might be of interest to some members of APSA - to upgrade national data systems for economic policy. The case has been developed with Dr. Robert Reischauer, former head of the Congressional Budget Office and currently a member of the Executive Committee of Harvard’s Board of

Overseers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lloyd S. Etheredge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

**(Dr.) Lloyd S. Etheredge, Director
Government Learning Project**

**cc: Vice Presidents Rodney Hero, Ira Katznelson, Gary King
Dr. Henry Brady**

Etheredge - May 17, 2004
DRAFT

Increasing Resources for Political Science:
Nine Strategies for APSA¹
by Lloyd S. Etheredge

1.) Mini-symposia for hypothesis generation and discussions with donors.

There is a widespread perception that the social sciences peaked in the Great Society years. Thus, it would be helpful to develop mini-symposia, in PS, to provide commentaries about current policy issues and outline competing theories and/or new research programs. (Five to seven researchers could be asked to provide discussions of five-to-ten pages each.) In turn, these symposia would provide a flow of ideas for Dr. Brady and our Vice Presidents to discuss with NSF, private foundations, and other potential donors.²

At this point, the strategy is a failure: In The Fog of War Robert McNamara proposed ten evidence-based lessons from the conduct of American foreign policy in the second half of the 20th century. (His project was driven by the fact that 160 million people, equal to 10% of the world's population in 1900, were killed in political conflicts in the 20th century.) It seemed to me that APSA should be able to mount a constructive dialogue with McNamara's ideas that would help to identify productive lines of research and new lines of funding. I do not understand why it has been impossible for our profession to organize such a symposium

¹ Reference copies of documents cited in this memorandum are available on www.policyscience.net.

² In a recent email I suggested an APSA cooperative, like C-SPAN, using Internet technology to bring academic conferences and lecture series from many geographic sites to all of our members. This technology could substitute, and it might be preferable. A discussion of the technology is contained in a budget for a US-Islamic C-SPAN project, on www.policyscience.net.

Etheredge - May 17, 2004
DRAFT

for Perspectives on Politics - but since discussions of these journal problems are available elsewhere I will not revisit the problems here, except to say that I think it still is a good strategic idea.

For fund-raising, it would be helpful to have a mini-symposium to engage Bernard Lewis's influential theory of political development in the Islamic world and its policy (and research) implications.

2.) International observation sites for comparative foreign policy

Without new data, science reverts to scholasticism. There is unlikely to be scientific progress in the study of international relations unless we can acquire new data. The enclosed letter to Dr. Brandon (April 8, 2004) builds upon the work of the historian Paul Kennedy and outlines an initiative for twelve international observation sites to monitor and understand global and regional trends in world politics.

3.) Hierarchical image models of political behavior (e.g., of Blacks and subordinated populations)

The enclosed review chapter, "Wisdom in Public Policy," will appear in a research volume organized last year by Robert Sternberg when he was President of APA. Pp. 24-29 outline a paradigm shift, and new measurements, for the study of ideology and political behavior - a shift from measuring attitudes toward a shared external reality to measuring objects of perception.

The measures to support and evaluate these new models offer a cleaner and integrated

Etheredge - May 17, 2004
DRAFT

theory (of the kind beloved by physicists) of political behavior and (for example) clinical psychology. Thus they also - as the enclosed correspondence with Dr. Virginia Cain at the National Institutes of Health suggests - may offer special insight into the political, civic, labor market (etc.) participation and induced pathologies within Black and other subordinated populations.³

³ This framework has been untested for more than two decades: 1.) it requires a substantial investment that is beyond the capability of individual researchers or the sums awarded to individual researchers; and 2.) it has been derailed by the agenda-setting processes (including sharp elbows and complacency) in the National Academy of Sciences/ National Research Council advisory system that has shaped the fate of our discipline.

- There have been three rounds of derailments. The first round - which had a widespread and devastating effect on our discipline - occurred in the 1980s, when Luce, Ferejohn, Fiorina, et al. took control of the NAS/NRC system and quietly used it (misused it, in my view) to shift funds to behavioral rational choice theory and defund competitors.

During a second round - in the early 1990s - Philip Converse and Sidney Verba served on a review committee that killed the idea because it was too theoretically and civically relevant: Converse said that he feared a political attack against the social sciences from the Right, whose ideological assumptions about economic policy could be tested by the new measures. (Sidney Verba said that if he was a younger man he "would jump on this line of research," but he did not publicly dissent from a decision to kill a recommendation to fund the investment.) As the years have passed, and there was continued silence in the third (recent) round, it also has become clear that the life's work (and still-reigning theories) of Converse, Verba, and other NAS/NRC members also are challenged, and might be proven limited deeply inadequate, by the new measures and wider model. Thus, the self-inhibiting mechanisms identified by Kuhn's Structure of Scientific Revolutions probably have been involved - and we require a more open and responsive APSA mechanism. [If there is a behaviorally consequential distribution of vivid and powerful hierarchical images of citizen-government relations in the US population (including Blacks), textbooks about American democracy and government would become much more interesting than the bland respectability of the Michigan model and the Verba tradition of conventional attitude measures (with its still-limited R^2) to explain non-participation.]

Etheredge - May 17, 2004
DRAFT

4.) Michelson-Morley tests of ideological assumptions

A related initiative is to organize critical experiments and competing research teams to test the empirical assumptions behind recycling ideological ideas. Yes - of course - there are many “interests” supporting ideological arguments, and only a few people may have a sincere desire for evidence, etc. But it is one of the roles of universities (e.g., for which we provide academic tenure) to support evidence-based democratic decision making. It is a bit painful and sobering to recall Barry Goldwater’s Conscience of a Conservative from the 1950s and to notice that a vast range of important empirical claims about the psychology of individual/government relations are not yet evaluated in American government textbooks.

5.) A social pathology/social policy observation site in Washington, D.C.

The enclosed letter to Dr. Brandon (April 14, 2004) notes that Medicaid expenditures now exceed \$250 billion/year, the principal source of the expenditures being charges to the health care system resulting from uncorrected social pathologies (e.g., alcoholism, drug addiction) that have become invisible in our national policy debates. Today, forty years after the last major cycle of empirical investigations, it may be possible to build the interdisciplinary study of individuals in pathology-inducing systems (and the effective delivery of social support and public services to individuals within such systems) by selecting a specific observation site (Washington, D.C.). The alliance with NIH and the biomedical sciences could be mutually beneficial.⁴

⁴ There should be renewed interest following publication of Marmot’s The Status Syndrome later this year.

6.) Evidence-based Policy Centers to Respond to Citizens' Questions.

Another submission to Dr. Brandon's committee (April 5, 2004) outlines a new system to organize political and financial support for the social sciences. It proposes to create a national system of NSF Evidence-Based Policy Centers that would receive policy-relevant, researchable questions from individual citizens and civic groups and state and local officials. Advisory committees would prioritize the questions, and the Centers would conduct literature reviews, surveys of experience (e.g., best practices) and new research to answer them. I think that this expanded role for citizens will produce good questions, added financial support, and be beneficial to the social sciences and to the country.

7.) Restarting Content Analysis⁵

The pioneers in quantitative content analysis set aside their research in the mid-1950s because the sophisticated questions that they wanted to ask were beyond the input, storage, and processing capabilities of their computers. Today, content analysis is a method whose time has come - both because the required computer hardware is available and because there has been such an explosion of democracy and national/international communications flows to be monitored.

At this point, the key investment is to build a content-analysis engine, similar to SAS or SPSS for the analysis of quantitative data. It is a long-term project that (like SAS or SPSS)

⁵ There are other methods (e.g., the analysis of individual contact networks and influence, rather than relying upon models of formal interest groups and group politics; AI models) that also probably should be developed to understand a changing world. For pioneering work by Ithiel de Sola Pool: Humane Politics and Methods of Inquiry (Transaction Books, 2000).

Etheredge - May 17, 2004
DRAFT

will require many years and millions of dollars.⁶ And there will be extraordinary challenges to understand the “meaning” of communications content.

I am aware of one initiative along these lines, by Roger Hurwitz, Hayward Alker, and others via MIT’s AI Lab. However the project appears to be stuck because - applying as individuals - the level of funding requires ARPA/DOD support which, in turn, places the computer science division at NSF into the review process. And they want a renewed content analysis initiative to tackle hard questions in their field. There is an impasse.

At this point, leadership from APSA (via discussions with Dr. Brandon) may be helpful.⁷ We are at a stage that is similar to building global observation sites for basic meteorology: temperature, pressure, humidity, precipitation, wind velocity and direction. We need to get the first steps underway, without piling an impossible task on a small network of researchers. Like building and operating particle accelerators in physics, these new capabilities cannot be built and managed by released time of the relatively small number of tenured teaching/research faculty.

⁶ Lloyd Etheredge, “How to Nurture Creativity and Progress in the Social Sciences: Comment on the National Science Board’s Draft Report,” January 8, 2003, pp. 14-17, attached.

⁷ These also is one social science member (of 24) on the National Science Board, Dr. Elizabeth Hoffman, President of the Univ. of Colorado system, whose support will be essential. I not believe that a new Assistant NSF Director for the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences has been named but the occupant has the potential to play an important role.

8.) Checkoff systems for cross-cultural research

It has been recognized, for many decades, that American social psychology is built upon experiments with American undergraduates and that theories and estimated coefficients of political behavior research may reflect only a changing historical period in American society and culture. (The wry example of a drunkard, at night after the bars have closed, looking for his keys underneath a street light when he lost the keys at a different location “because the light is better here” has been heard at many professional meetings.) Yet today we could create Partnership Centers for easy and automatic cross-cultural replication at sites which offer a maximum discrepancy or other theoretical interest. NIH and NSF could negotiate “call” contracts with specified prices at a Center in India (for example). An American social psychologist or political scientist, like a physician ordering lab tests, could check an appropriate box and add a brief paragraph on a research application and, if the grant is approved on its basic merits, a requisite sum would be added automatically.⁸

Even paid adult subjects are possible at a small additional cost in UDCs. We may find that a new research infrastructure shakes up a great deal of complacency and helps us to reconceptualize and refine our understanding of behavior.

9.) Evaluating Plato: Enlightenment and Belief-Independent Spiritual Growth

At the conclusion of my Wisdom chapter, I suggest (pp. 47-51) a fresh look at the process of enlightenment (described by Plato) in the light of several alternative methods (e.g. for belief-independent spiritual growth) that may produce a core of similar outcomes. It

⁸ Etheredge, “How to Nurture Creativity and Progress . . .” pp. 8-10, attached.

Etheredge - May 17, 2004
DRAFT

would be interesting, someday, to know if these traditions are right and to have a new generation of textbooks in political behavior/American politics/international relations that move beyond simple and recycling explanatory theories based on linear combinations of traits and attitudes.