

Publisher: Richard S. Nicholson
Editor-in-Chief: Daniel E. Koshland, Jr.
Editor: Ellis Rubinstein
Managing Editor: Monica M. Bradford
Deputy Editors: Philip H. Abelson (*Engineering and Applied Sciences*); John I. Brauman (*Physical Sciences*); Thomas R. Cech (*Biological Sciences*)

Editorial Staff

Assistant Managing Editor: Dawn Bennett
Senior Editors: Eleanor Butz, R. Brooks Hanson, Barbara Jasny, Katrina L. Kelner, David Lindley, Linda J. Miller, Phillip D. Szuro, David F. Voss
Associate Editors: Gilbert J. Chin, Pamela J. Hines, Paula A. Kiberstis, Suki Parks, L. Bryan Ray
Letters: Christine Gilbert, *Editor*; Steven S. Lapham
Book Reviews: Katherine Livingston, *Editor*; Annette Theuring, *Assistant Editor*; Susan Randolph, *Editorial Assistant*
Contributing Editor: Lawrence I. Grossman
Editing: Lois Schmitt, Valerie Jablow, *Senior Copy Editors*; Douglas B. Casey, Harry Jach, Erik G. Morris, Christine M. Pearce
Copy Desk: Ellen E. Murphy, *Supervisor*; Joi S. Granger, Beverly Shields, Melissa M. Quackenbos, Kirsten L. Wall; Kameaka Williams, *Assistant*
Editorial Support: Sherry Farmer, *Supervisor*; Linda Dienavs, Carolyn Kyle, Michele Listisard, Diane Long, Jennifer Mattson, Patricia M. Moore
Administrative Support: Leslie Blizard, Sylvia Kihara, Jeanette Prastein
Telephone: 202-326-6501; **FAX:** 202-289-7562; **TDD:** 202-408-7770

News Staff

News Editor: Colin Norman
Features Editor: John M. Benditt
Deputy News Editors: Tim Appenzeller, Joshua Fischman, Jean Marx, Jeffrey Mervis
News & Comment/Research News Writers: Ivan Amato, Christopher Anderson, Jon Cohen, Faye Flam, Troy Gately, copy, Constance Holden, Richard A. Kerr, Eliot Marshall, Richard Stone, Traci Watson, *Intern*
U.S. Bureaus: Marcia Barinaga (Berkeley), Elizabeth Culotta (Durham, NC), Anne Simon Moffat (Chicago), John Travis (Boston)
Contributing Correspondents: Joseph Alper, Barry A. Cipra, Robert Crease, Ann Gibbons, Virginia Morell, Robert Pool, Leslie Roberts, Gary Taubes, M. Mitchell Waldrop
Administrative Support: Fannie Groom, Jennifer Hodgkin
Telephone: 202-326-6500; **FAX:** 202-371-9227

Art & Production Staff

Production: James Landry, *Director*; Wendy K. Shank, *Manager*; Laura A. Creveling, Scherraine B. Mack, Linda C. Owens, *Associates*
Art: Amy Decker Henry, *Director*; C. Faber Smith, *Associate Director*; Diana DeFrancesco, *Technical Illustrator*; Holly Bishop, *Graphics Associate*; Elizabeth Carroll, *Graphics Assistant*

Europe Office

Senior Editor: Richard B. Gallagher
Associate Editor: Jeffrey Williams
News Editor: Daniel Cleary
Correspondent: Peter Aldhous
Editorial Associate: Catherine S. Siskos
Business Manager: Julie Eastland
Address: Thomas House, George IV Street, Cambridge, UK CB2 1HH
Telephone: (44) 0223 302067; **FAX:** (44) 0223 302068

Science Editorial Board

Charles J. Arntzen	John J. Hopfield
Elizabeth E. Bailey	F. Clark Howell
David Baltimore	Paul A. Marks
J. Michael Bishop	Yasutomi Nishizuka
William F. Brinkman	Helen M. Ranney
E. Margaret Burbidge	Bengt Samuelsson
Pierre-Gilles de Gennes	Robert M. Solow
Joseph L. Goldstein	Edward C. Stone
Mary L. Good	James D. Watson
Harry B. Gray	Richard N. Zare

EDITORIAL

A Scientific Approach to Governing

Science. Dr. Noitall, you are one of the great political scientists of all time, the man who engineered Harry Truman's comeback, the man who wrote Winston Churchill's speeches, the man who got Arthur elected King of the Round Table.

Noitall. A vast understatement of my true worth.

Science. Have you come up with any new ideas on the political scene?

Noitall. Of course. I have a brilliant new idea which avoids the vicious dictatorships of the right and the left and the impotence and gridlock of democracy and will solve the problems of automation, diversity, and overpopulation.

Science. And what brilliant new device could possibly do that?

Noitall. It is called a "benevolent dictatorship."

Science. Could anyone ever find a benevolent dictator one could trust?

Noitall. I have just spent the weekend at Monticello going into the background and career of Thomas Jefferson, statesman, scientist, diplomat, inventor, activist, revolutionary, and member of the establishment.

Science. What was his attitude toward science?

Noitall. He was always a great supporter of science and considered that the three greatest men in the world at the time (whose pictures he hung on the walls of his house) were Newton, Locke, and Bacon. He not only supported science funding but believed science was the mechanism for improving the standard of living, and he was himself an inventor and innovator.

Science. But could he perform the role of a dictator?

Noitall. Not only was he able to push most of his proposals through an extremely balky and fractionated legislature, but he founded the University of Virginia, designed its architecture, and then supervised its construction by observing it through a telescope from his plantation. He selected all the initial professors for the university.

Science. Was Jefferson environmentally sound?

Noitall. He voluntarily gave up growing tobacco a century ahead of the first surgeon general's report.

Science. Isn't there one small problem, namely, that Jefferson is dead?

Noitall. Quite the contrary. Today presidents are surrounded by image-makers, and the candidate's image turns out to be far more important than what he really does. If you are dead you can't make mistakes, and your image-makers can develop a consistent reputation without any new changes of mind that would be confusing to the voters and disastrous for legislative success. Most people believe that a secret Machiavellian group is governing any president or prime minister anyway, and therefore it would not be surprising to them that the leader is actually dead instead of just sleeping. Confirmation of their deepest conspiratorial suspicions should make them happy. The minor campaigning disadvantages are easily offset by the fact that there are already busts and statues of Jefferson all over the country, and there is no problem of name recognition.

Science. What was his approach to social security and health care?

Noitall. Jefferson was particularly solicitous of his slaves' welfare, educating them to help increase their skills and providing for security and the best health care that era could offer.

Science. Slaves! How could you even suggest a man who kept slaves.

Noitall. Jefferson called the whole system of slavery an "abomination" and worked to abolish it. This type of ambiguity is a political advantage because the public who sees a person on both sides of an issue always assumes the candidate's heart is on their side, but that his words to the opposition are campaign oratory. Individuals of high principles who stick to one viewpoint rarely get elected.

Science. Dr. Noitall, are there any other political devices that you are inventing to strengthen modern leaders?

Noitall. I have been looking into (i) "ruling by decree" as an alternative to legislative gridlock, (ii) "divine right of kings" as an alternative to lengthy and costly campaigns, and (iii) "off with their heads" as a more effective way of dealing with the opposition than negative campaigning.

Daniel E. Koshland, Jr.

Science

A Scientific Approach to Governing

Daniel E. Koshland Jr.

Science **261** (5119), 275.

DOI: 10.1126/science.261.5119.275

ARTICLE TOOLS

<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/261/5119/275.citation>

PERMISSIONS

<http://www.sciencemag.org/help/reprints-and-permissions>

Use of this article is subject to the [Terms of Service](#)

Science (print ISSN 0036-8075; online ISSN 1095-9203) is published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1200 New York Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005. The title *Science* is a registered trademark of AAAS.

1993 by the American Association for the Advancement of Science