may be justified during the early stages of analysis of a tough multidimensional problem, a comprehensive political strategy to "prevent" nuclear terrorism must await further progress in data collection and analysis.

In one of the report's more controversial recommendations, the authors urge that "U.S. PAL [permissive action link] technology should be shared prudently with other nations possessing nuclear weapons to protect against unauthorized use by military personnel or terrorists" (p. 16). Yet the wisdom of sharing highly classified U.S. nuclear-weapon safety systems with such nations as Pakistan, India, Israel, South Africa, or other countries that may soon have nuclear weapons is seriously open to question. States that are considering nuclear-weapon options should harbor no illusions that any technical fixes will be provided to facilitate the acquisition or deployment of nuclear weapons.

Moreover, the consensus report states that progress on U.S.–Soviet strategic arms control is closely linked to the risk of international nuclear terrorism (p. 32). I cannot understand how deep cuts in these strategic arsenals will have any effect at all on reducing the attractiveness to terrorist groups of symbolic attacks on nuclear fuel-cycle facilities, or on the interest of such groups in stealing weapons-grade nuclear materials.

Despite these minor shortcomings, *Preventing Nuclear Terrorism* is destined to become the principal shelf reference on the subject for some time to come. It will structure public policy debate, and it offers great insights into avenues for further research. Above all, the authors deserve praise for their foresight in identifying this major public policy issue without the prior occurrence of a catastrophic nuclear-terrorist action.

RANDY J. RYDELL
*Governmental Affairs Committee,*
*United States Senate,*
*Washington, DC 20510*

# Eminently Minimal Policies

**Energy and the Federal Government**. Fossil Fuel Policies, 1900–1946. JOHN G. CLARK. University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1987. xxiv, 511 pp., illus. $39.95.

This is an exhaustive, highly original contribution to the study of federal fuel policies during the first 50 years of the 20th century. The first to consider government regulation of coal, oil, and natural gas in a comparative context, John Clark challenges accepted views of business-government interaction and breaks new ground by evaluating policy from the perspective, given all too little consideration at the time, of the nation's changing energy mix. As few fuel studies have done, *Energy and the Federal Government* scrutinizes the mind-set and behavior of public officials, big business and small, labor, and energy consumers as it probes the problems of policy formulation, relating the economic history of each industry to the complexities of the ongoing energy transition.

Clark's research in over 30 archival collections and a broad array of public documents testifies to the hesitant role of the federal government even as the performance of the fuel industries became subject to intense public scrutiny and, from the 1920s, increasingly identified with the public interest. Characterizing policy from 1900 to 1946 as "unsystematic, vague, and eminently minimal" (p. 381), Clark makes clear how prevailing particularist criteria, by confining decisions to specific fuel sources, precluded the possibility of coherent energy regulation. Apart from the limits imposed by a fuel-by-fuel approach, decision-making was fragmented by an evaluative framework that generated discrete regulatory patterns for each stage of energy system operations—production, processing, transportation, and distribution. Adding to this parochialism, fuel politics produced legislation reflective of the priorities pushed by dominant groups within each industry.

But as this comprehensive investigation demonstrates, the absence of balanced policy to insure efficient energy use and long-term resource protection was in no sense synonymous with federal inaction. Clark provides the most detailed account we have of government intervention during recurrent, if quite different, types of crises. World War I witnessed unprecedented federal and local emergency controls over fossil fuel supplies and consumption, extending to the geographic redistribution and price-fixing of coal, the nation's major fuel source. The supply disruptions and price hikes that followed some 3600 strikes in 1919 (involving 4 million miners) and the walkout of bituminous and anthracite workers in 1922 again forced federal action, bringing temporary piecemeal return of wartime controls, if not the executive or congressional leadership necessary to remedy the coal industry's basic problem from the 1920s, competition from oil. A decade later, when depression produced a wide array of reforms from a newly empowered central government, what distinguished New Deal fuel policies was that they served industry interest groups and short-run political goals. After bonanza oil finds depressed crude prices in the late 1920s and early 1930s, independent producers called for federal action, including import quotas, but the efforts of the majors brought state production controls and only weak federal monitoring of interstate "hot oil" shipments. Mobilization for World War II again meant significant intervention. Here Clark's detailed treatment reveals inadequate centralized authority, bureaucratic proliferation, jurisdictional conflict, gross ineptitude, and the social costs of disregarding the lessons of the previous and more successful wartime fuel initiative.

Differing from the accepted interpretation, which traces business-government cooperation to the progressive era and sees it as a response to later crises, Clark views these short-lived alliances much as he does the fuel industries' rhetoric of laissez-faire, as defensive tactics intended to prevent undesired federal mandates. While expediency and practical goals shaped the inconsistent response of fuel interests, throughout this period federal authorities failed to define the "public interest" as it applied to the most basic of all national resources, energy. And this, as Clark reveals, was despite the availability of a theoretical framework established successively in the recommendations of the Federal Oil Conservation Board and the National Resources Committee. The FOCB, created by President Coolidge in 1924, identified end-use analysis, energy efficiency, and conservation as integral components of responsible energy policy formulation. The following decade the National Resources Committee similarly emphasized the interrelatedness of all fuels and the superiority of different fuels for different end uses. Warning against the accelerating consumption of nonrenewable oil, the NRC prepared cohesive, comprehensive policy proposals that were "ignored in principle and flouted in practice" (p. 295).

Historically, the idea of the public interest has been intrinsic to the conceptualization of the purpose of public policy of the United States. It was largely disregarded in the case of fossil fuels during a period of cheap energy and expected abundance. As we approach the coming half century there is much to be learned from this important study of policy failure.

DOLORES GREENBERG
*Energy Policy Studies, Hunter College,*
and *Graduate School,*
*City University of New York,*
*New York, NY 10021*