

judgment and prejudice of the analyst.

In the second place, the contribution of each activity to a particular benefit almost never can be considered as simply proportional to the expenditure on it. For example, in some cases there is a threshold below which little benefit is possible. In some cases there is a diminishing return on increased expenditure. The analyst needs only a slight knowledge of mathematics to devise expedients to take these considerations into account, but in doing so he follows his own judgment, and there is no way of testing their validity except by retrospect years later. The quantitative appearance of the result is an illusion; mere use of mathematical technique does not insure an accurate conclusion if inaccurate or uncertain assumptions are introduced into the calculations.

As the cost-benefit analysis becomes more elaborate, in the hope that by taking into account every conceivable consideration the result would be more precise, the result depends more on the decisions of specialists in this kind of calculation than of persons with practical experience in the subject analyzed and understanding of the implications of decisions. Many of the arbitrarily assignable conversion factors should be a matter for political decision by government, for they depend on the relative weight to be attached to considerations of international credits, commerce, prestige, cultural values, technical progress, educational standards, and many other factors that are not commensurable. Cabinet Ministers cannot be expected to occupy themselves with mathematical detail;