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Incrementalism and Policymaking in the USA Adaptations for a Partisan Age

Michael T. Hayes

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Incrementalism and Policymaking in the USA

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—Professor B. Guy Peters, *University of Pittsburg*

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PREFACE

This book began as an attempt to improve and update *The Limits of Policy Change*, but it quickly evolved into a very different book. This is not another attempt at explanatory theory. Readers should not expect an introduction to theories of the policymaking process here or a comparison of incrementalism with other theories of the policy process. To the contrary, I take it as self-evident that policymaking is incremental most of the time and devote myself instead to arguing that this is a good thing—not something to be lamented.

I do acknowledge that there are times when nonincremental policies are warranted, even though they inevitably go beyond the available knowledge base, and I identify those circumstances in Chap. 2. But most of the time, candidates calling for transformative change are pandering to voters' unrealistic sense of what is possible, making promises they cannot really fulfill.

Compromise is out of vogue these days, too often characterized as a violation of strongly held moral principles. But there are both moral and intellectual reasons why compromise is both necessary and desirable. Hopefully, this book will help readers understand why this is so.

Hamilton, NY

Michael T. Hayes

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