Interest Groups and the Media in Post–Cold War U.S. Foreign Policy

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How successful are interest groups in shaping American foreign policy? How successful are the media in affecting foreign affairs? During the cold war, the usual answer to both questions was "not much." With the exception of some ethnic and economic groups under specific circumstances, most analysts would conclude that interest groups did not fare very well, and the media largely played a supportive role to official policy, at least until the Vietnam War. With the end of the cold war, however, are the answers to these questions likely to be the same?

In this chapter, I discuss the access, involvement, and influence of these two nongovernmental actors in the foreign policy process after the cold war. In particular, I focus upon how and why the role of interest groups and the media in foreign policy have changed in recent years. In doing so, I shall explore several domestic and international factors that have increased interest group and media access to the foreign policy decision-making machinery, discuss how new and differing interest groups and media flourish in this changed environment, and analyze how more and more foreign policy decisions have moved away from the crisis to the structural and strategic varieties, a change that enhances the impact of interest groups and the media on the foreign policy process. Finally, and as others have done before, I take up the more difficult issue of relative influence of these actors in this new environment.

Factors Limiting the Role of Interest Groups and the Media during the Cold War

The usual reason for arguing that interest groups had limited impact on foreign policy during the cold war turned on several structural and pro-
First of all, American foreign policy was more likely to be initiated by the president than by Congress. As such, interest groups had much greater difficulty gaining access to the former than to the latter, since Congress had numerous committees and subcommittees that were accessible. Although Bernard Cohen points out that interest groups sought to influence the bureaucracies at the executive level, their efforts yielded limited results and may have aided the interests of the bureaucracies more than the interests of the lobbyists. Second, foreign policy issues and decisions were usually quite remote from the lives of Americans, and rallying support or opposition by interest groups posed a significant challenge. Third, crucial foreign policy decisions were likely to be crisis decisions—characterized by short decision time, high threat, and surprise. For such situations, foreign policy making was more likely to be centered in a small group in the executive branch, allowing little, if any, congressional participation. In short, interest group influence was further curtailed during these important decision-making periods. Fourth, with the number of interest groups operating in the policy arena, opposing groups would likely arise over any divisive issue, weakening the impact of any one interest group or a set of coalitional interest groups. In such a competitive environment, policy makers actually gained more latitude for dealing with competing pressures from one group or another.

During the cold war, the media exercised limited influence because of self-imposed constraints and the nature of the foreign policy process itself. The media tended to be deferential to governmental officials and governmental policies, as one analysis noted: "The press was often a sideline player and occasional cheerleader in the policy process simply because the process, itself, was anything but open to public view." Thus, the members of the media more often seemed to elicit support for official policies from the public than to challenge them. In an environment that offered the prism of the cold war for interpreting global events, the media were less likely to advance new policy options themselves or from others. Put somewhat differently, "The press was often critical but of the execution of policy more than the aims." Finally, and as with interest groups generally, the media operated in a conflict-prone and crisis-prone environment during the cold war, further muting its criticisms of policies and options.
Factors Facilitating the Role of Interest Groups and the Media after the Cold War

Since the end of the Vietnam War and cold war, however, some analysts have suggested that access by interest groups and the media in the foreign policy process is no longer what it was. Tierney and Uslaner, among others, imply that earlier assessments about foreign policy interest groups may be somewhat timebound, pointing to several new domestic and international factors. Likewise, Bennett dates the rise of greater media access to the process as coming "after the late 1960s [late Vietnam War]"; he also argues that the media's greater role "in the crumbling elite consensus" within the country began about that same time. As issues became more contentious at home among competing elites (e.g., between the White House and the Congress), the media also became more involved and offered more criticism of official policy to the public at large. In short, after the cold war—and with the dramatic changes in global politics that James Scott and A. Lane Crothers discuss in the opening essay of this volume—media access and involvement increased proportionately.

Global Factors and Increased Interest Group/Media Access

The end of the cold war—vividly dramatized by the opening of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Germany, the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, and the implosion of the Soviet Union—shook the foundation of American foreign policy. With the communist threat no longer serving as such an important unifying force for American foreign policy making, new issues—economic, environmental, and social-cultural—are now on the agenda. More often than not, these issues divide, rather than unite, the American public and policy makers. Trade issues, like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) divided the Democrats in Congress from President Clinton in 1993, while environmental issues have fissured both political parties. The trade-offs between trade and human rights considerations, as in the case of most-favored-nation (MFN) status for China, have divided Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, and even various regions of the country. Furthermore, even as some security issues remain on the agenda (or as some new ones gain a place there), they, too, are more likely to divide than to unify. As the controversy surrounding the expansion of NATO or American action in Bosnia demonstrates, no American position toward these questions is self-evident or widely supported, as might have occurred during the cold war years. Americans of Central European back-
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ground may clamor for more rapid expansion of NATO, but political elites worried about the future of Russia may not. Contrast, too, the array of domestic positions toward Russia, the former Soviet republics, or toward Bosnia with the rather singular American response to the Soviet invasion of Hungary during the height of the cold war or toward Castro’s Cuba in the 1960s.

This new global policy environment and its issues have important implications for enhancing interest groups and media access to the foreign policy process. Because these issues increasingly tend to be divisive domestically and because no unified American position is readily obvious on many of them, they offer immediate opportunities for interest group involvement in the foreign policy process. Indeed, they invite interest groups to mobilize and to attempt to influence policy in the executive and legislative branches to a much greater degree than was possible during the cold war. The media similarly benefit from this environment, since these policy controversies within official Washington are grist for their reporting. Additionally, as more actors are increasingly involved in the foreign policy process, and as policy making has become a more disjointed and untidy process than during the cold war, the media may seek out various political actors—even as those participants in turn seek out the media to get their message out. In short, the media now can play a more significant role in setting the agenda or in exacerbating the debate over foreign policy issues.

Domestic Factors and Increased Interest Group/Media Access

In the domestic arena, at least two important changes have occurred that enhance interest group and media access and involvement on foreign policy issues: one has occurred within the congressional constellation of factors; the other within the society at large.

Congressional Change and Interest Groups. Due to internal reforms dating back to the end of the Vietnam War (see chapter 5), foreign policy interest groups now have greater access to Congress. First, congressional committees now share more jurisdiction on foreign policy matters. By one estimate, some sixteen committees in the House and the Senate have at least some responsibilities over foreign and defense policy issues. In addition to the increase in jurisdictional decisions made by Congress, multiple referrals on legislation by the congressional leadership also have led to this greater dispersal of responsibilities. More committees and subcommittees now consider aspects of foreign policy legislation. To be sure, with the Republicans in control of the Congress since 1995 and some efforts being made to pare back the size of sub-
committees and committees, joint referrals have ended (although not sequential or split referrals), but dispersal of foreign policy responsibilities within Congress remains.\textsuperscript{12}

These internal changes are perhaps best manifested in the two principal foreign policy committees in the Congress, the House International Relations (formerly Foreign Affairs) Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Both committees have held more and more hearings on both legislative and oversight matters in recent decades. In the 1950s and 1960s, the House International Relations Committee (then Foreign Affairs) held about 300 hearings during a particular Congress. Near the end of the Vietnam War, during the 93rd Congress (1973–74), the committee held 295 committee and subcommittee hearings. By the 97th Congress (1981–82), however, the number of hearings had grown dramatically, totally 702 during those years. During the 104th Congress (1995–96), the number had fallen back to 452, but the intervening Congresses had all been over 600 hearings per year.\textsuperscript{13} By contrast, the number of hearings by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is smaller, but that committee, too, has increased its use of hearings and special committees and subcommittees to investigate particular concerns.\textsuperscript{14} This kind of committee activism has important implications for interest groups in that it offers more and more avenues of access to the foreign policy process.

Second, congressional staff dealing with foreign policy have increased. For instance, the staff for the House International Relations Committee in 1971 totaled eleven; in 1991, eighty-five; and in 1996, sixty-five.\textsuperscript{15} For the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the important change was in the decision to provide the subcommittees with some staff of their own (previously the committee staff served the subcommittees as well) and to enlarge the number of aides from twenty-five in 1979 to sixty-seven in 1991 (although the staff size declined to forty-six by 1996).\textsuperscript{16} Both of these changes in the House and the Senate have enabled more points of contact for interest groups, especially since efforts to influence the committees are more frequently directed toward staff than toward the members themselves. While the recent cutbacks in congressional staff militate against interest group activity, staff size remains reasonably large by historical standards, facilitating sustained interest group activity.

Third, the operation of the armed services committees have changed. Both the House National Security (formerly the Armed Services) Committee and the Senate Armed Services Committee are now involved not only in authorizing the defense budget, but also in devising strategies
for the post–cold war era. As Paul Stockton has noted, "[L]egislators are no longer satisfied to focus on budgetary details and ignore more fundamental issues." To be sure, this judgment does not mean that members of Congress have abandoned efforts at "micromanaging" the defense budget. Instead, it means that now, without an overarching American strategy toward the world, Congress has joined the executive in thinking about the structure of forces and strategic goals for the U.S. military. Paul Stockton has nicely summarized this new environment: "[I]ncentives for members to strategize now exist side by side with incentives for micromanagement." As a result, interest groups have more access and potential impact than before. While micromanagement of the defense budget traditionally meant protecting favorite pork-barrel programs back home—the substance of interest group politics—strategizing also aids interest group activity, inviting even more groups into the process. Because congressional staffs will not likely have the time or inclination to devise wholly new grand strategies, congressional offices and committees will become receptive to the work of think tanks or other outside lobbying groups. Stockton once again goes to the heart of the matter: "Strategy is the province of think tanks and—perhaps—the Pentagon." Furthermore, the use of annual authorizations as opposed to open-ended authorizations facilitate strategizing and micromanagement—ensuring an ongoing role for interest groups.

Finally, and beyond the internal change within the Congress, congressional campaigns and interest groups have been more intertwined in the post–cold war era. Through the use of "soft money" to political parties and through "independent" campaigns by interested groups (e.g., the large number of campaign ads by the AFL-CIO in the 1996 election), interest groups are more and more a fixture of congressional life. While the post–cold war milieu may have accelerated the involvement, interest groups and congressional campaigns have long been intertwined.

Congressional Change and the Media. Much as the congressional changes facilitate interest group activity, these changes also enhance the media. Indeed, the process is a synergistic one between the media and Congress. As the congressional process becomes a more open one, the media have greater access to the committee process and enhance their ability to report the partisan and ideological conflicts that may result; as the media become an increasingly standard feature of congressional process, members increasingly seek to use such outlets to shape their message to their colleagues and to the public at large.

The end of the cold war did not begin the process of the media's
role; instead, it has expanded considerably from the Vietnam War to the present. Beginning with the televised hearings on the Vietnam War in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the mid-1960s, the role of television coverage, for example, has expanded dramatically. First, television coverage of the House and the Senate began. Next, C-Span, the cable network, offered "gavel-to-gavel" coverage of all House and Senate sessions as well as many committee hearings on legislation, nominations, and investigations. In turn, the House and Senate press galleries offered almost instantaneous venues for congressional reactions to foreign events and to White House announcements. As President Clinton was announcing his foreign policy team for his second term in December 1996, for instance, members of the Senate appeared within minutes in the gallery to offer their evaluation of the new personnel. Earlier, after President Clinton announced that Secretary of State Warren Christopher would not continue in a second term, Senator Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) held a press briefing to outline the criteria for a new secretary and the foreign policy issues that the United States needs to address in the years ahead. Added to this television coverage, other electronic (i.e., radio and now the internet) and print media have continued their coverage of both ends of Capitol Hill.

The other side of this synergistic relationship is the effort that members make to use the media for their own ends. Increasingly, members of Congress are "media entrepreneurs," who take advantage of the expanded number of media outlets and the increased coverage of the Congress to influence the public policy debate, including foreign policy. Members may use a variety of techniques to obtain media coverage both inside and outside the institution. Within the institution, and in addition to regular floor and committee debate, House members may use "one-minute" speeches to attract attention to an issue, while Senate members may use the "morning business" period for the same purpose. Similarly, and as suggested above, members may hold news conferences on foreign (and domestic) policy issues. The possible advantages of these institutional measures are that they may be picked up by the national networks and their impact is magnified. As a result, members engage in conscious efforts to produce short, pithy statements that may capture the media's attention.

Members also seek to use the media to influence policy to a wider audience and to enhance their reputation as policy experts. By writing op-ed pieces for national newspapers (e.g., the Washington Post, the New York Times, or the Wall Street Journal), or issuing press releases, members may gain attention and be invited on daily television inter-
view programs, such as the *The NewsHour* with Jim Lehrer, or on the Sunday morning interview programs, such as *Meet the Press*, *Face the Nation*, or *This Week*. In these ways, the members gain national exposure and begin to influence or even shape the debate. Such actions, as Karen Kedrowski reminds us, go beyond simply reaching their own constituents and are particularly important at the agenda stage in dealing with an issue.\textsuperscript{24}

*Societal Change and Interest Groups.* The second significant domestic change to assist interest groups in the foreign policy realm is the change in American society and politics at large. The political process within the United States has perceptibly moved toward greater partisan and ideological divisions. Divisions exist on foreign policy issues (as they probably always have),\textsuperscript{25} but they have become more intensified in the current period without the dampening effect of the cold war environment.\textsuperscript{26} As a result, as partisan and ideological divisions have become more pronounced, opportunities for interest groups are enhanced—and even magnified—on some foreign policy issues.

Prominent foreign policy controversies from the 1980s to the early 1990s accentuate the new role of interest groups in the foreign policy process over partisan and ideological issues. Aid to the Nicaraguan contras in the 1980s elicited a great deal of controversy along partisan and ideological lines and a great deal of interest group activity. Two observers of interest group activity on this issue reported this new intensity: “What distinguished the groups in the Nicaraguan case . . . was the scale, duration, and intensity of their activity. For a period of more than seven years, between 1982 and 1989 and peaking in 1985–86, over two hundred organizations became involved in efforts to influence congressional votes on U.S. policy toward Nicaragua.”\textsuperscript{27} Once again, these organizations ranged from groups that were formed to support or oppose this singular issue only to more general conservative and liberal political groups that decided to lobby on this particular policy question.

Interest group activity over a sanctions bill toward Saddam Hussein’s Iraq (after the leadership of that country had brutally used chemical weapons on its Kurdish population in March 1988) illustrates this pattern as well. In the words of one congressional aide, the lobbying “was obscene.”\textsuperscript{28} A principal sponsor of the bill, Senator Claiborne Pell [D-R.I.], apparently agreed with this assessment, albeit in more understated language: “All the special interests got into the act.”\textsuperscript{29} Despite the fact that a tough, wide-ranging economic sanctions bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate with bipartisan support and was approved by the full Senate only one day after its introduction,\textsuperscript{30} opposition quickly
emerged. It came from the Reagan administration and several prominent interest groups. The lobbying effort included those agricultural interests that saw Iraq as "a large and growing market for U.S. agricultural exports," oil companies that were increasingly importing Iraqi oil into the United States, and defense contractors and large industrial countries with trading interests in Iraq. Further, the U.S.-Iraq Business Forum, a group of American companies with business interests in Iraq and with informal links to the Iraqi embassy in Washington, pressured for the defeat of this kind of economic sanctions bill. As a result, alternate bills and watered-down bills were subsequently introduced, and the original measure failed to become law.

At the end of the cold war, trade issues, such as the NAFTA and GATT agreements, have accelerated interest group activity as well. The groups involved on this issue range from the traditional economic interest groups to environmental, consumer, and single-issue or political organizations, such as Empower America and Americans for Democratic Action. While the total number of interest groups involved in the NAFTA debate is difficult to estimate with much precision, the array of groups was quite substantial, probably numbering in the hundreds. By one set of estimates, too, the total spending by interest groups was extraordinary; U.S. interest groups spent some $10 million while Mexican interest groups spent $30 to $45 million "on no fewer than twenty-four lobbying, public relations and law firms." 31

As more and new kinds of issues arise in the post-cold war era (e.g., the question of immigration, U.S. intervention abroad, new trade regimes), and activate many different types of interest groups, their role becomes an even greater feature of the foreign policy process. Furthermore, as some issues, and particularly issues that require technological and scientific knowledge to sift through the debate (e.g., global warming or the handling of fissile materials with the dismantlement of nuclear weapons), gain a larger place on the agenda, specialized interest groups will enjoy even more privileged access to the policy process than in the past.

Societal Change and the Media. These societal changes have also had an impact on the media. As partisan and ideological divisions in American society have intensified, more and more controversies have arisen. Controversies are the stuff of greater media access and involvement on issues, including foreign policy. As controversies widen, the purview of the media spreads as well. No longer is media coverage limited to foreign policy issues at the White House, the Pentagon, and the State Department (or the "Golden Triangle," as Lance Bennett called it). 32 That
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is, the media now move beyond official statements and Washington policy makers in covering foreign policy events. Once again, with controversial issues such as immigration, nuclear proliferation, and trade policy crowding the foreign policy agenda, more and more actors have a part to play in shaping the direction of foreign policy. These actors, in turn, enable the media to have greater access.

The movement away from the cold war in American society enhances the media in yet another way: it enables the media to try to add new issues to the foreign policy agenda, sometimes successfully. Consider, for example, the powerful effect of the media in portraying the death and starvation in Ethiopia in the mid-1980s and Somalia in the early 1990s. When NBC television showed a 1984 report on the Ethiopian famine, the effect on American foreign policy was dramatic: "The impact was immediate and overwhelming. The phones started ringing at NBC and at the Connecticut headquarters of Save the Children.... The next night, NBC aired another BBC report and, again, the response was staggering. CBS and ABC a week later aired more reports on the famine—with even more response, more reports. The story had exploded."\(^{33}\) U.S. policy makers took note as well, and they began to shape an American response.

In the immediate aftermath of the cold war, too, the media aided in prodding President Bush to address the starving and suffering in Somalia. Media pictures and accounts of the death and suffering resulted in part in American military aircraft being used to transport food and, eventually, American ground forces being deployed to aid in the distribution of food. In some ways, the media went even further. They met the American forces as they came ashore in Somalia, turning it into a media event: "Among the most vivid scenes from that operation was the look of startled Navy seals in war paint hitting the beaches which had already been secured by television news crews to record the landing."\(^{34}\)

The ability of the media to place new issues on the agenda and to shape American foreign policy should not be exaggerated, as some recent analysts suggest. The so-called "CNN effect" may not be quite as potent as some imply, even in the Somalia case mentioned above. As one careful analysis of this episode reveals, the media "did not independently drive Somalia to the surface." Rather they reflected the policy goals of those in the Bush administration, the Congress, and the international community who wanted to enlarge American actions in that country.\(^{35}\) Similarly, despite vivid portrayal of the killings and the suffering in Bosnia, the media hardly propelled that issue to action by foreign policy makers in the early 1990s. It was not until the slaughters of July
1995 that the Clinton administration finally decided to take decisive actions to try to resolve the festering issue. The same proved to be the case for Rwanda. Although the media dramatically catalogue the slaughters in Rwanda in 1994 and the desperation in that country in 1996, American actions were largely delayed by the Clinton administration, in the latter instance, until after the presidential election. In short, as another analyst contends, the media are much less effective in shaping policy and policy makers than a first look might suggest: "The CNN Effect is narrower and far more complex than the conventional wisdom holds." 

New Interest Groups and New Media
A third element in this changed post-cold war environment is the sheer growth of new interest groups and media. Both the new global environment and societal changes directly contribute to the expansion of interest groups and the media.

The Rise of New Groups. While one estimate puts the total number of interest groups at about 12,500, those with a foreign policy focus is surely a fraction of that number. Even so, the number of foreign policy interest groups continues to grow. While traditional foreign policy groups often mirrored the key domestic groups (i.e., business, labor, and agricultural groups with their foreign policy concerns), they also included a few prominent ethnic lobbies and some veterans groups. Over the past two or three decades, though, several new groups—foreign lobbies, some religious lobbies, think tanks, and scattered single-issue lobbies—have come along and have increasingly exercised some foreign policy clout.

While the Jewish lobby has been, and remains, the most prominent ethnic lobby, it, too, has been undergoing some change. With increasing, successful efforts to obtain peace in the Middle East, and with some accompanying fissures in Israeli society, some divisions have been detected in the Jewish lobby in the United States, eroding some of its impact and allowing the emergence of other ethnic lobbies to garner significant attention.

Still, ethnic group actions to shape the direction of foreign policy have reached "a historic high water mark," in the estimate of one analyst. One significant change is the lobbying effort by American citizens with origins in the old Soviet empire. In 1993, several different American ethnic associations (e.g., Armenian Americans, Ukrainian Americans, Czech Americans, Slovak Americans, Polish Americans, Hungarian Americans, Latvian Americans, and a host of others) joined together to form the Central and East European Coalition. Among the
goals of this coalition are promoting the expansion of NATO, fostering more economic assistance to the countries of Eastern Europe, and reducing the emphasis on Russia in the Clinton administration’s policy. While ethnic members with these origins are relatively small in number (about 9 percent of the American population), they are mainly located in some key Midwestern states that could have significant political clout in closely contested elections (at either the presidential or congressional level). As a consequence, President Clinton sought to gain the support of these ethnic voters by his actions and the Republican Congress promoted actions consistent with the wishes of these voters as well. A separate lobbying effort by one of these groups, the Armenian Assembly, has also proved potent. It has been able to direct economic assistance to Armenia and has gained congressional approval for banning aid to Azerbaijan, its rival in the region.

Two other changes in this area are the growth of congressional caucuses to deal with these concerns and the growth of ethnic-based political action committees (PACs). In 1988, six ethnic congressional caucuses existed (e.g., the Hispanic Caucus), while in 1997, fifteen such caucuses exist (e.g., the Portuguese American Caucus). In 1988, twenty ethnic PACs existed, while that number in 1996 was up to fifty-one. Both kinds of organizations are mechanisms for ethnic groups to exert more influence in the political process.

Two increasingly influential ethnic lobbies are the Cuban American lobby and the African American lobby. The Cuban American National Foundation is the most prominent of the Cuban American groups, and it has affected the behavior of both political parties in how they address the issue of Cuba. While Republican administrations have generally been more receptive than Democratic ones, the Clinton administration stopped appointments to the Department of State, opposed cuts in Radio Marti, the U.S. government-run station broadcasting to Cuba, and responded promptly to the Cuban attack on two unarmed planes in international waters off Cuba. One congressional member, commenting on the foundation’s power, claimed that the interest group “uses difficult, difficult tactics whenever you disagree with them.”

The African American lobby has been quite successful lately as well. Trans-Africa, its most prominent lobby, was largely responsible for initiating a coalition lobbying effort to impose economic sanctions on South Africa in the mid-1980s. Indeed, the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 could be traced rather directly to its efforts. Equally so, the actions of Trans-Africa and its head, Randall Robinson, were pivotal in keeping the Haitian issue on the foreign policy agenda during 1993 and 1994.
and in pushing for stronger action against the military rulers in 1994. A hunger strike by Randall Robinson seemingly had an important impact on U.S. policy makers at the time. As a consequence, this interest group and the Congressional Black Caucus seemed to have been pivotal in affecting the Clinton administration's decision making over taking action on Haiti in the fall of 1994.

Another important transformation among new interest groups has been associated with religious lobbies. While religious lobbies were particularly prominent on foreign policy issues during the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s and over El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the nuclear freeze issues in the 1980s, these groups have not declined in activism. Indeed, the end of the cold war, with such difficult issues as Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia, has actually sparked renewed activity and involvement to infuse a moral and ethical component into American foreign policy. In a reversal of positions from earlier decades, some religious activists now favor and lobby for greater use of America's intervention capabilities to address the underlying social ills. According to Father J. Bryan Hehir, a foreign policy adviser to the American Catholic bishops and a professor at the Harvard Divinity School, "The nuclear question has moved out of the terms of the debate [for religious groups]. What has taken its place are questions about the need for intervention because of human rights violations or civil wars or ethnic conflicts." 

Far and away, the most prominent change in lobbying of the American foreign policy process has been growth and pervasiveness of foreign lobbies, interest groups initiated and funded—directly or indirectly—by other countries. Table 7.1 catalogs this growth in countries represented and number of firms or individuals employed by each country over the past two decades. Particular increases have occurred among Eastern European and African countries in their lobbying efforts in Washington, although all regions of the world show growth. Several examples of these newest interest groups will convey a better sense of their prevalence.

In recent years, the Japanese lobby effort has received the most attention and publicity, but that foreign lobby is only one among many foreign lobbies that now occupy the interest group arena in Washington. The foreign lobbies coming from the republics that used to comprise the old Soviet Union are the newest groups in Washington. These new nations are rapidly hiring law and public relations firms to advance their views in both the executive and legislative branches of the American government. Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Latvia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan are some of the countries
Table 7.1  Number of Foreign Interest Groups by Region, Represented in Washington, 1977, 1986, and 1996

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that now have representatives. Russia, too, has joined these lobbying efforts by late 1993; indeed, the government of Russia or Russian firms had signed agreements with nine different law and consulting firms. 47 The People’s Republic of China also has established a large contingent of representatives to make their case with the American government, especially for dealing with the sensitive issue of trade relations between
the two nations. Top-flight lawyers and former officials of the American government have been employed by U.S. business concerns interested in gaining access to Chinese officials, and other lobbyists are promoting Chinese businesses within the United States. These joint efforts, by officials of American business and by representatives of Chinese business and government, provide for a persuasive effort to maintain most-favored-nation (MFN) status for China and for promoting and expanding American trade and investment with China.

Many less familiar and powerful states have hired their own Washington representatives or sent their own representatives to lobby their particular cases. These officials represent countries from virtually every corner of the world. For many years, Nigeria, Rwanda, Swaziland, and Zaire in Africa have had hired representatives in Washington, while a representative for Mauritania was contracted more recently. Indonesia and India from Asia have similarly sought representation. Haiti, Mexico, and Guatemala from the Caribbean and Central America have hired lobbyists in recent years as well. From the South Pacific, for example, New Zealand has considerable direct lobbying occurring by its key groups. Members of the New Zealand Dairy Board and the New Zealand Meat Producers Board, for example, are visitors to Washington with the Department of Agriculture and the Congress as their important targets. In short, foreign lobbies are now the standard in the Washington interest group community.

Even some unpopular political factions from foreign countries have hired firms to represent them in Washington. Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army, and the Ulster Unionist Party have joined the parade by hiring representatives in Washington. Likewise, the Russian party of Vladimir V. Zhirinovsky, the Liberal Democratic Party, has sought to bring its nationalist message here as well. The National Council of Resistance in Iran, a party labeled as Marxist by the U.S. State Department, hired a Washington public affairs firm in a $15,000-a-month contract to convey its views to the Congress. These factions join others, such as the Kashmiri American Council, a group committed to Kashmir's independence, as a way to counteract governments in power with representation in the United States.

Finally, the recent revelations of foreign campaign contributors to President Clinton's 1996 election campaign even more vividly dramatize the role of foreign lobbies. Contributions came from, either directly or indirectly, the Lippo Group in Indonesia, supporters in Taiwan, a consultant with ties to a Thai business conglomerate, a South Korean entrepreneur, and perhaps from the Chinese government or its repre-
sentatives. While some of these funds were returned, and investigations are ongoing over the legality of activities, the flow of foreign money into the political process totaled in the millions of dollars.54

**New and Old Media.** Several important media changes have occurred near the end of the cold war and continue apace in the post–cold war period. The growth of the electronic media has been most pronounced to the point that those media are more pervasive than the print media. The "CNN-ization of the world," referring to the power and influence of the Atlanta-based network of the Turner broadcasting system (and now owned by Time-Warner), epitomizes this new electronic explosion. Yet, the growth goes beyond that station to include the expansion of cable stations and cable systems, both nationally and worldwide (e.g., C-Span, Fox Broadcasting, MSNBC, the NBC Station in Europe, and Britain's Sky TV) and the proliferation of radio stations.55 The literal explosion in the use of the fax machines and the internet, too, has virtually assured instantaneous global communications.56 Through these media outlets, the impact of the media on foreign policy is more "immediate, sensational, and pervasive."57

The first part of table 7.2 provides some sense of the growth in the electronic media over the past two decades and the stability in the circulation of the print media. While the number of radio stations has grown slowly over the past two decades, the number of television stations, and cable systems has doubled or even tripled since the early 1970s. By contrast, newspaper circulation has remained markedly stable until about 1990, and it has experienced a slight decline to this day.

The impact of such coverage on the foreign policy process and on American society generally remains unclear, especially when several other different indicators are considered. As the second half of table 7.2 reveals, the amount of interest in news about other countries and about U.S. foreign policy among the American public has remained stable and generally low over the last two decades. The percentage of the public that is "very interested" in information about other nations remains in the mid-30 percent range, and the percentage "very interested" in U.S. relations with other nations averages somewhat higher at 45 to 50 percent.58 More troubling, although not shown in table 7.2, viewership of nightly broadcasts on the major networks continues to decline to only 42 percent in 1996 compared to about 80 percent in the 1970s. Among those under thirty, the viewership is even lower at only 22 percent.59 Furthermore, foreign policy coverage by the news media remains markedly small. Estimates of such coverage range from 11 to 16 percent for all print and network coverage.60 In one study of ten newspapers, more-
Table 7.2  Changes in the Media Outlets and Interest in Foreign News, 1974—1994

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper circulations</td>
<td>62 mil.</td>
<td>62 mil.</td>
<td>62.5 mil.</td>
<td>62.5 mil.</td>
<td>62.3 mil.</td>
<td>60 mil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of radio stations</td>
<td>4361</td>
<td>4316</td>
<td>4668</td>
<td>4863</td>
<td>4987</td>
<td>4913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of television stations</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>1065</td>
<td>1235</td>
<td>1442</td>
<td>1512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cable systems</td>
<td>3158</td>
<td>3875</td>
<td>4825</td>
<td>7600</td>
<td>9575</td>
<td>11,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of the public “very interested” in news about other countries</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of the public “very interested” in news about U.S. foreign relations with other countries</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


over, the foreign policy coverage was even smaller at about 2.6 percent, and the foreign coverage by the major American networks and the number of foreign correspondents continues to decline as well.

Still, and importantly, the media seemingly have enlarged their ability to bring more and more dramatic international events into the homes of Americans. In this sense, by the decisions on what international events the media shall report and how those events are covered, the media can affect the direction of foreign policy debate at home.

The Locus of Decision Making and Interest Groups

A final factor that has enhanced interest group and media access to the foreign policy process is the changing locus of decision making. Most foreign policy issues during the cold war were crisis issues—issues that required a quick, immediate response to meet some impending threat. Because those policies and decisions were largely decided within the executive branch, interest groups had limited access (and influence). While such security issues may still confront policy makers in the post-cold
war environment, their aggregate number seems to have declined, and the kinds of security issues have changed, as noted earlier. As a result, access for interest groups is likely to increase as decisions move toward those decisions that have been identified as strategic and structural in nature.

Strategic policies are those that "specify the goals and tactics of defense and foreign policy." Within this very broad category, decisions focusing on the policy guidelines for American actions toward a particular region (e.g., Southeast Asia), country (e.g., Russia), or issue (e.g., trade) would qualify as strategic policy. While the president has the advantage of recommending the basic policy direction in a given area, these strategic decisions are increasingly subject to review and evaluation in Congress, especially when they do not require immediate action. As such, the locus of these decisions is shifting to the Congress or to a combined legislative-executive decision. As the time allowed for decision making increases and the locus of decision making moves toward the Congress, interest groups have more opportunities to convey their stances on the outcome. Indeed, as we shall note shortly, the Congress has often passed procedural legislation requiring congressional review of executive actions in a number of strategic areas, further expanding interest group access.

Structural policies are even more ripe for interest group activity. These policies are directed at the details of actions in the foreign and defense areas. As Lindsay and Ripley note, these policies focus on "procuring, deploying, and organizing military personnel and material ... and which countries will receive aid, what rules will govern immigration." Both by tradition and constitutional requirements, the ultimate locus of such decisions are in the Congress, not in the executive branch. In this policy area, as in the strategic policy area, interest groups have an ever larger role to play, owing to the locus of decisions in the congressional arena and the greater frequencies of these decisions.

Coupled with the changing nature of foreign policy issues is the growth in the procedural requirements placed upon the executive branch by the congressional branch. These procedural requirements, virtually by definition, require congressional involvement—an involvement which allows the time and venue for interest groups to have more access and impact on foreign policy. Over the past two and a half decades, several key areas of executive foreign policy have become subject for congressional review: the war-making area, the commitment-making area, the trade and aid area, and the general oversight of foreign policy.
Several illustrations will demonstrate this more direct involvement of Congress and identify the additional avenues for interest groups to play a part in the process. While the war-making and commitment-making areas are less successful in enabling Congress to play a larger role (despite actions such as the passage of the War Powers Resolution of 1973 or the Case-Zablocki Act of 1972), the trade and aid areas and the oversight activities, by contrast, have seemingly been more consequential for a congressional role and for interest group activity as well. These areas, too, epitomize the focus on important strategic and structural policy questions.

First, since the Trade Act of 1974, Congress has actually written into law requirements that private groups advise the administration during any trade negotiations. This process has been accelerated even more in recent years with the use of the so-called fast-track procedures. At the negotiating stage of the process, for example, four types of advisory committees from the private sector may participate: (1) a broadly based committee drawn from key sectors of the country; (2) a general advisory committee from industry, agriculture, labor, and other sectors; (3) sector or functional committees composed of those interests directly affected by any prospective agreement; and (4) policy advisory committees from state and local governments and their representatives. Depending upon the particular representatives chosen and industries represented, some of the most important private sector companies and interests can have a direct and tangible impact on the negotiating process. Once the negotiation process is completed, these committees and advisory panels may then submit their evaluations to the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the United States trade representative (USTR). Here, too, these groups could affect the outcome of the process. Finally, congressional committees must draw up the implementing legislation for the negotiated agreement, allowing yet another avenue for interest group influence.

Second, foreign economic and military assistance allows interest group access. Because arms sales legislation passed in the mid-1970s now requires both a report to, and a review by, the Congress of any proposed arms sales, foreign policy interest groups have a ready opportunity to mobilize and weigh in on the final disposition of any sales proposal. This review period lasts for fifty days from the time of the announcement of the arms sales (a thirty-day formal review period and a twenty-day informal review period) and affected interest groups could still have an opportunity to affect the final outcome.

Third, congressional procedural changes have enhanced interest
group access in the area of oversight. Because an increasing number of issues are subject to the congressional review process and because these reviews generally involve structural and strategic policy questions, the sheer volume of activity, as noted earlier, advantages interest groups. Both the principal foreign policy committees (House International Relations and Senate Foreign Relations) have expanded the number of oversight hearings, with the House side particularly noted for the increased number of such activities. Similarly, the national security committees (House National Security and Senate Armed Services) have undertaken these kinds of oversight hearings as well, even as they also move into the area of devising strategy. Such ready forums allow outside interested parties to seek to influence the Congress, and, ultimately, policy.

The Locus of Decision Making and Media Access

The media also benefit from the change in the locus of foreign policy decision making from crisis to structural/strategic issues and from the executive to the Congress. Structural and strategic issues are more likely to spark controversy, require expert analysis, take more time, and lack a readily identifiable policy consensus. For each of these reasons, media access and involvement will increase.

First, since structural and strategic issues, almost by definition, have a greater prospect of being linked to domestic politics, they are likely to generate controversy—the lifeblood of the media. Issues on base closings, the building of new weaponry systems, the granting of trade concessions, the reduction of tariffs, or the imposing of new environmental standards—all are likely to stimulate partisan and ideological differences at home. Such differences, too, are apt subjects for increased coverage by the media on a regular basis.

Second, structural and strategic issues often require policy "experts" and the exploration of viable policy options, further aiding the media. The appropriate means for disposing of surplus fissile materials from the dismantlement of nuclear weapons, for instance, requires those knowledgeable both technically and politically. The media thus can search out these experts for their reporting. (Interestingly, too, these experts are likely to come from prominent interest groups.) Furthermore, with this kind of issue and with other current ones, such as the uses and abuses of foreign aid, human rights violations in China, or drug trafficking from Latin America, investigative reports on these subjects by the media are appropriate and potentially useful. Furthermore, the media can play a large role with these investigations through ferreting out issues that others may try to conceal (witness the role of the media over
foreign campaign contributions in the 1996 presidential campaign). In this way, the media contribute to, and shape, the foreign policy agenda in a way they could not when crisis issues dominated the political landscape.

Third, because structural and strategic issues involve more decision-making time for policy makers, the media are advantaged as well. Much as with interest groups, the media can play a larger role, the more a decision is extended over time. The expanded time allows the media to explore and report on the various aspects of the controversy and assess the impact of the controversy on the domestic arena. As the decision time expands, then, the various "players" on a given issue will be able to seek out the media to try to make their case with the American public.

Fourth, these structural and strategic issues oftentimes do not enjoy a readily identifiable policy position. The question of the expansion of NATO or the wisdom of expanding free trade areas is fraught with controversy. While the media may contribute to the debate over such questions with their investigative work or with the reliance on policy experts, those actions also fuel the debate and indirectly enhance the impact of the media.

Finally, and as with the discussion of interest groups, the locus of decision making of these issues largely remains outside the exclusive purview and control of the executive branch. That is, Congress plays a role in deciding on both strategic and structural issues. In this way, access is more assured for the media, and their involvement enlarged.

**Policy Influence: The Impact of Interest Groups and the Media**

With all these points of access, the issue that still remains is over the degree of interest group and media influence on foreign policy. While involvement and access may arguably be necessary conditions for policy influence, they are not sufficient ones. At the same time, with marked domestic and international changes, the prospects look seemingly bright for interest groups and the media to have a significant impact in the years ahead. In this sense, in the post–cold war era, we should likely see an increase in interest groups and media influence across a wider array of foreign policy issues.

While confirmatory data on this assessment remain fragmentary, some selective analyses provide initial support for expanding interest group influence. The effect of foreign policy interest groups in the trade area, most recently over NAFTA and GATT, is well recognized. Indeed, in the case of the former, for example, lobbyists were actually asked to
"lend a hand" to get the pact through the Congress, and, in a reversal of the usual roles, an official of Office of the USTR attended the meetings of a business group supporting the pact. In the foreign aid area (e.g., in the case of Zaire or Israel), the conclusion about interest group influence remains the same. While certain conditions (such as the receptivity of the interest groups' target and the level of campaign funding to individual members of Congress) had to exist in the Zaire case, Congress still kept open the money spigot flowing to that regime, despite a dismal human rights record. Similarly, agricultural credits continued—and economic sanctions were postponed—toward Iraq, owing to the sustained lobbying efforts of selected foreign policy interest groups. More recently, questions have been raised over the impact of foreign campaign contributions to the Clinton administration's Asian policy. While official denials remain, the magnitude of the contributions and the level of sustained activity by foreign groups leave lingering doubts.

Despite these illustrative examples, though, significant barriers still hamper interest groups from working their will on foreign policy makers even as these groups are increasingly involved in the process. First, interest group effectiveness still probably requires the mobilization of a larger group or the public at large to have an immediate and sustained impact. Only in rare instances do foreign policy issues produce such an effect among the public. Second, the dispersal of more and more interest groups involved in the decision process has the effect of reducing the influence of any one group. What matters as a result is the relative power and capabilities of particular groups in the political arena, not the sheer number of political actors. In this sense, there is hardly a linear relationship between the growth in interest group activity and their policy impact. Indeed, the relationship might actually be curvilinear, with issues generating few interest groups or those generating many interest groups producing limited policy impact in both instances, albeit for differing reasons: A small number of groups does not have sufficient clout, while a large number of competing groups cancel out one another's influence.

Third, the complexity of the American political system, coupled with the continued (albeit weakened) presidential discretion on foreign policy questions, works against interest groups gaining their will in the foreign policy process. The usual judgment that interest groups can be more effective in stopping action than in changing directions remains as accurate in the foreign policy arena as it does in the domestic arena. Yet the ability of these groups to initiate changes in policy likely will remain a problem in the post-cold war era as much as it was in the cold war environment. Despite the magnitude of lobbying on both sides
of this issue, Arnson and Brenner still felt compelled to conclude that "interest groups may have had a limited impact on the direction of U.S. policy toward Nicaragua in the 1980s because of the limited scope and opportunities for influence offered to them by the Congress."75

Fourth, new lobbyist registration laws and incipient campaign finance reform efforts do not bode well for either domestic or foreign policy interest groups. Under the new lobbying bill passed in late 1995, lobbying by lawyers for foreign interests is not exempt, and lobbying lawyers must now register with the House and the Senate. Lobbyists must now report on the names of their clients, the issues that they are working, and what part of the federal government that they have tried to lobby. In addition, these lobbyists must also provide an estimate of the income derived from each lobbying activity.76 Furthermore, if campaign reform were to become a reality in the wake of the 1996 presidential campaign scandal, restrictions on campaign contributions, arguably the most important avenues of access and influence for interest groups, would likely be incorporated. In this sense, interest groups, including the foreign lobbyists, will have a difficult time impacting the process.

Confident conclusions about the media’s influence, however, are more difficult to make. While the media have expanded their access and involvement, their influence remains hotly debated. While the sheer magnitude of the media coverage appears greater across a host of issues, and conditions exist for greater influence, analysts remain divided. Some analysts still see the media as largely a captive of official administration policy. In this sense, the media never veer too far from the official policy line of the administration in its reporting on foreign policy. When they do, they do so because “the sphere of legitimate controversy” has been expanded by officials themselves. Thus, the notion of an “oppositional media” since the Vietnam War is hard to sustain.77 In short, the media remain largely supportive of official policy or at least followers of the lead provided by policy makers.78

Other analysts see the emergence of an increasingly independent role for the media in influencing policy. The media can work to set the foreign agenda through the stories that they report (e.g., famine in Ethiopia and Somalia) or even engage in what Doris Graber labels “media diplomacy.” That is, members of the media become part of the foreign policy event (e.g., the role of CBS newsman Walter Cronkite in bringing Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian president Anwar Sadat together, which resulted in Sadat’s visit to Israel).79 Furthermore, there remains the view among the public that the media possess a liberal bias
in their reporting and try to influence the public and policy makers with those views.\textsuperscript{80}

Finally, a more recent argument about the influence of the media charts a middle position among these differing views of the media's influence. Patrick O'Heffernan contends that the media and the government have a "mutually exploitative" relationship with one another.\textsuperscript{81} As Heffernan argues, "[B]oth [the foreign policy community and the media] are adept at supporting, manipulating, or attacking the other. The relationship is sometimes competitive and sometimes cooperative, but that is only incidental to its central driving force: self-interest."\textsuperscript{82} Increasingly, then, policy makers and the media view one another as part of the foreign policy process, and, as a result, each influences the other.\textsuperscript{83}

\textbf{Conclusion}

This chapter has sought to look at a series of factors that seem to challenge the traditional view regarding the influence of interest groups and the media in the foreign policy, especially as we enter the post-cold war era. Although many of the arguments have been raised by others, they have not received the kind of treatment in the American foreign policy literature that they deserve. Perhaps it is best to close this discussion on these concerns with a plea for more systematic work on these two subjects in combination and for greater assessment of how one impacts the other and, in turn, affects the foreign policy process. There has been, for example, a renaissance in the study of American foreign policy and public opinion in the past decade, but it has not been matched by a similar rebirth in the study of interest groups and their effects on foreign policy. By contrast, the efforts to study the role and impact of the media is largely in its embryonic stage. As a result, we remain left with much of the conventional wisdom about interest groups, media, and foreign policy—a wisdom that may not be very conventional for the post-cold war world.

\textbf{Notes}

\footnote{1} Throughout this chapter, I draw upon material from my \textit{American Foreign Policy and Process}, 2d ed. (Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock, 1992), and 3d ed. (Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock, 1998), specifically the chapters discussing interest groups and the media; and from my "Congress" entry in Bruce W. Jentleson and Thomas G. Paterson, eds., \textit{Encyclopedia of U.S. Foreign Relations} 1 (New York: Oxford University


3 The most succinct argument for this limited influence of interest groups in foreign policy is in Barry B. Hughes, *The Domestic Context of American Foreign Policy* (San Francisco: Freeman, 1978), pp. 198–202, from which part of this argument is drawn. Also see, however, Bernard Cohen, *The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1973); and Robert H. Trice, "Domestic Interest Groups and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Behavioral Analysis," in Abdul Aziz Said, ed., *Ethnicity and U.S. Foreign Policy*, pp. 118–129, on the problem of gaining access to the Congress and the executive.


8 Hoge Jr., "Media Pervasiveness," p. 137.


13 For data on these hearings on a Congress-by-Congress basis, see Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Survey of Activities*, 97th Cong. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Gov-


18 Stockton, “Beyond Micromanagement,” 244.

19 Stockton, “Beyond Micromanagement,” 258. While the telling point here is surely the potential role for think tanks, but also note how lobbying can occur by governmental groups as well (e.g., the Pentagon).

20 On annual authorizations within these committees, see Christopher J. Deering, “Decision Making in the Armed Services Committees,” in Ripley and Lindsay, eds., Congress Resurgent, pp. 155–182.


23 Kedrowski, Media Entrepreneurs, 2, on the amount of effort that Congressman Jim Traficant (D-Ohio) spends on his “1-Minute” speeches. Also see pp. 3–7.


28 Quoted in Bruce W. Jentleson, With Friends Like These (New York: W.W. Norton,
The information on interest group activity over Iraq is drawn from pp. 77–86.

29 Jentleson, With Friends Like These, p. 86.

30 Jentleson, With Friends Like These, p. 78.


37 McCormick, American Foreign Policy and Process. 2d ed., 452.


41 Glastris, “Multicultural Foreign Policy in Washington,” p. 35.

42 Glastris, “Multicultural Foreign Policy in Washington,” p. 34.


44 For a more extended treatment of this lobbying group and the Arab American lobby, see Yossi Shain, “Multicultural Foreign Policy,” Foreign Policy 100 [Fall 1995]: 69–87.


48 Peter H. Stone, “China Connections,” National Journal, March 26, 1994, pp. 708–712. Representatives include former members of Congress (e.g., Howard Baker and Gary Hart) and former officials in the executive branch officials (e.g., Carla Hills, Lawrence Eagleburger, and Alexander Haig), among others.

49 On Zaire’s lobbying, see Stephen R. Weissman, A Culture of Defe­rence: Con­


52 Interviews with representatives of these two boards in Wellington, New Zealand, July 1995.


55 For some recent data on the explosion of the electronic media and the decline of the print media, see McCormick, American Foreign Policy and Process, 3d ed., ch. 12.


59 “Old News Ain’t Beat Yet,” Economist, May 18, 1996, p. 32. The subheading for this section draws its title from the ideas in this article.


On the problems of disentangling the influence of interest groups in the foreign policy arena, see Tierney, "Interest Group Involvement in Congressional Foreign and Defense Policy," pp. 97–98.


Jentleson, *With Friends Like These*.


See Daniel C. Hallin, *We Keep America on Top of the World: Television Journalism and the Public Sphere* (London: Routledge, 1994). The quoted phrases are at pp. 54 and 51, respectively.

See Livingston and Eachus, "Humanitarian Crises and U.S. Foreign Policy."


