

Gilt by Associations: Appointments to Federal Advisory Committees in U.S. National Security Politics

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Federal Advisory Committees (FACs) offer opportunities for private citizens to gain access to the national security apparatus of the U.S. government. What explains the appointment of interest group affiliates to national security FACs? This article analyzes patterns of interest-group membership in FACs, using an original data set based on official General Services Administration data. Organizational affiliations are identified across thousands of appointments. The analysis shows that interest-group appointments to critical national security FACs increase with opposition-party power in Congress. This suggests that interest-group access improves when the administration needs help with a political strategy to overcome legislative opposition.

Keywords: Federal Advisory Committee, national security, civil society, interest groups, presidential power

There are over a thousand Federal Advisory Committees (FACs) scattered throughout the executive branch of the U.S. government. These committees bring together policy makers and private citizens as “a useful and beneficial means of furnishing expert advice, ideas, and diverse opinions to the Federal Government” (Federal Advisory Committee Act 1972). Some are short lived, convened on an ad hoc basis to resolve crises or evaluate specific government failures, often described as “blue ribbon” commissions to signal the exceptional qualifications of their members. Other FACs have existed for

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decades, and at least one lays claim to a lineage going back to 1789.¹ The private citizens that serve as appointees to FACs are in a position to influence public policy, yet little systematic research exists about the types of people that sit on these committees in the domain of national security. This article explains the conditions that promote interest-group access to the national security apparatus by way of membership in FACs. It argues that FACs offer opportunities for collaboration between the executive and civil society organizations on public relations efforts in the domain of national security politics. It shows that the executive appoints interest-group affiliates when it faces larger, more unified partisan opposition in Congress.

The Defense Policy Board (DPB) is perhaps the most prominent FAC in the domain of national security. It has included former vice presidents of the United States, former secretaries of state, former leaders of the intelligence community, and current scholars from the overlapping orbits of academia and policy research institutes. It is meant to act as an executive branch think tank to provide the secretary of defense with advice on national security strategy and policy. Some argue that it does not merely provide objective, expert advice to the government but also (or primarily) acts as a public relations instrument for the administration. In 2002, Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow in foreign policy at the Brookings Institution, derided the board as "just another p.r. shop for Rumsfeld," saying that it merely "gives his ideas more currency" (Thompson 2002). Several of its members at the time, for example, former Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle and former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director James Woolsey, regularly promoted the Bush administration's goal of regime change in Iraq during appearances on Sunday talk shows and at conferences hosted by Washington, DC think tanks. According to this critique, instead of providing decision makers with critical information and policy expertise, the board has acted as a conduit for the dissemination of public relations information on behalf of policy choices already favored by the administration.

The DPB is not the only national security FAC to invite criticism for functioning as a public relations conduit. In 1983, President Reagan convened the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, chaired by Henry Kissinger, ostensibly to "study the nature of United States interests in the Central American region and the threats now posed to those interests" (Reagan 1983). To many, the commission seemed to have its policy recommendations ready from the beginning, in harmony with the president's agenda. The White House was committed to its program of rolling back Central American Marxism as a critical component of its Cold War strategy. Tom Wicker wrote on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* that the committee's real work was "calculated to generate for Mr. Reagan the Congressional and public support he hasn't otherwise achieved" (Wicker 1983).

From 1962 to 1972, the Industry Advisory Council to the Department of Defense (IAC) was supposed to serve as a forum for the secretary of defense to discuss "logistics" and "management objectives... policies and practices" with representatives of defense contractors (Roose 1975, 55). In fact, the IAC went beyond this remit, helping to craft

1. This is the Advisory Committee on International Law. It is a matter of some dispute whether the group as constituted under President George Washington bears any resemblance to contemporary FACs. Nevertheless, the federal government's database lists an establishment date for this committee as January 1, 1789, long before the advent of legislation requiring that the government keep and provide FAC data.

a messaging strategy in support of the Vietnam War. According to the minutes of an October 1969 meeting of the IAC,

[d]iscussion centered about the possibility of developing appropriate public relations programs which would tell this story to a greater number of people. There was the clear feeling that the story of U.S. successes—particularly in the Vietnamization program—had not been gotten over to the American public. Suggestions were made that Defense public relations officers make these briefings available through the medium of tape or discussions with the publishers of leading newspapers and magazines in order that they may be aware of the facts and conditions which actually exist in South Vietnam and the role the Defense Department has played and is continuing to play in achieving these successes (Roose 1975, 59).

The IAC proposed to launder information promoting the Vietnam War for the administration, even though executive branch agencies are generally barred from activities that could be construed as propaganda. Despite legislative efforts to constrain FACs in 1975, this information-laundering loophole remains. According to the Congressional Research Service, the law allows for the “dissemination” of otherwise proscribed public relations content if it is requested under the authority of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Kosar 2005, CRS-8).

This article concurs with the proposition that administrations see national security FACs as political instruments, as tools they can use to overcome political challenges, not just as forums for gathering policy-relevant information from the private sector. It argues that interest groups primarily serve as public relations partners to the executive in the domain of national security. Specifically, it finds that affiliates of civil society organizations (pressure groups, trade associations, and other nonprofit organizations) secure appointments to national security FACs with greater frequency when the president faces stronger partisan opposition in Congress. These private organizations exist for the purpose of influencing public policy decisions. The political science literature on the subjects of interest groups and national security politics implies that their most valuable contribution in this policy domain involves the production and dissemination of public relations content or, more bluntly, propaganda. FACs create opportunities for outside groups to collaborate with the executive in these activities.

The remainder of this article proceeds in four sections. First, it discusses existing research on symbiotic public–private relations and defines core concepts. Next, it deduces a theory of access based on the literature on interest groups and executive–legislative contestation over foreign policy in the United States. Then, it tests the core proposition of the theory using data on appointments to FACs from 1997 to 2012. These data are particularly useful because they identify the extragovernmental affiliation of committee members and their connections to different types of private organizations. They support the claim that the president’s political strength significantly affects the executive’s decision to appoint interest-group affiliates. Finally, the article concludes with a discussion of the broader context in which the study is situated.

Symbiosis

The theory I put forward in this article is premised on the notion that the relationship between interest groups and the government is often symbiotic rather than coercive.

Others have made similar arguments in the past. The very notion of a coherent military–industrial complex, a principal subject of President Eisenhower’s farewell address, implies a “conjunction of public and private power” (Nathan and Oliver 1994, 220). Defense contractors, the military, and Congress together constitute an “iron triangle” that blurs the distinctions between public and private actors. Contractors make a profit, the armed services expand their capabilities to wage war effectively, and congressional committee chairs protect their power over national security affairs (Adams 1982, 24–26). Rank-and-file legislators improve their reelection prospects by bringing economic activity to their home states and districts. The military–industrial complex is largely a post–World War II phenomenon in the United States, but the symbiosis between private and public interests in national security affairs goes back at least to the nineteenth century. During the Civil War, the operational demands of combat were often met by voluntary associations, which provided medical services, personnel, and other logistical assistance to the state militias that comprised the national army—or armies (Skocpol et al. 2002). In this case as well, both parties benefited. Private organizations got resources, improved their visibility, and increased their membership. The government enhanced its capacity.

The symbiosis between government and civil society entails more than private groups providing operational support for policy implementation. Extragovernmental organizations have another resource they can trade, namely their public relations value. Rather than compel policy makers to take actions favorable to an interest group’s cause, organizations make their case to the public, shaping the electoral incentives of office holders. This outside lobbying by interest groups is similar to going public by presidents, in that both occur more regularly when the public already supports the proposition on the table. The goal is less to persuade the public than to show a recalcitrant Congress which side of the debate has the electoral advantage. For both tactics, one major exception involves policy areas in which the public has limited independent knowledge (Kollman 1998, 155), and foreign affairs fits this description well (Canes-Wrone 2006, 83–102; Kernell 2006, 211). These public relations partnerships are quite common (Peterson 1992; Holyoke 2014, chap. 7).

Collaborations between the executive and diaspora groups highlight the special role that interest groups can play in U.S. national security politics. Nadejda Marinova argued that host states engage select exile groups in symbiotic partnerships in which diaspora organizations provide political leverage to the executive branch over the legislature. In return, they get financial, logistical, and political support. Far from being exploitative, “the host policymaker–diaspora relationships are mutually beneficial, not based on coercion, and represent a self-interested exchange of the two sides who sponsor activities that serve to further the foreign policy objectives of both parties” (Marinova 2017, 48). She evaluates this logic at work in the Lebanese-American, Cuban-American, and Iraqi exile populations in the United States. Similarly, Walt Vanderbush and Patrick Haney show that the Iraq and Cuba lobbies both played the role of marketing partner to the administration, arguing that insofar as these diaspora groups lobby the executive they are “pushing on an open door” (Haney and Vanderbush 1999, 341; Vanderbush and Haney 1999, 387; Haney and Vanderbush 2005, chap. 3; Vanderbush 2009, 287). I concur with their argument and applies this insight to FAC appointments, seeking to generalize the finding beyond these particular cases and the politics of diaspora organizations.

Civil Society, FACs, and National Security

Civil society plays an important role in democratic politics, and U.S. jurisprudence protects the rights of association and petition so that the people may organize for political action. Lobbying is one important means of holding government officials accountable for their behavior in office and for exerting special influence over policy. Private organizations also communicate their constituents' demands by availing themselves of the right to comment on proposed regulatory changes, as set down in the Administrative Procedures Act (APA). FACs offer another way for private actors to participate in governance while remaining employed by or affiliated with outside organizations. Some FACs are highly technical in their function, providing government with expert information from the private sector on matters such as accounting practices, power generation, and retail product bar code standardization. Others inform regulatory negotiations or review federal grant programs. The current study focuses on nonscientific program and national policy advisory boards, which involve the more political aspects of public policy making. Despite their abundance, little attention has been paid to FACs and what they reveal about the relationship between the executive branch and civil society in the context of national security politics.

FACs have a number of distinct roles in governance. Thomas Wolanin takes a broad view, arguing that commissions engage in both policy-making and policy-marketing behaviors. They both “formulate innovative domestic policies” and “facilitate their adoption,” by fulfilling one or more of the following purposes: policy analysis, window dressing, long-range education, crisis response, and issue management or avoidance (Wolanin 1975, 11–23). They are a means by which the legislature exerts influence over the bureaucracy, by shaping the “flow and content of information” to executive branch agencies, specifically by granting access to interest groups (Balla and Wright 2001, 799). Legislators create them to maintain political control without specific legislation to determine a definite policy outcome (McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast 1987). FACs also provide an opportunity for the executive to reward loyal members of Congress with administrative roles after their resignation or electoral defeat (Palmer and Vogel 1995, 677). They bolster the reputation of executive branch agencies to help secure passage of new regulatory proposals (Moffitt 2010, 881; Lavertu and Weimer 2011, 211). In contrast to the more contingent access granted to lobbyists or the episodic influence gained through public commentary, FACs “facilitate the permanent institutionalization of linkages between interests and the national executive” (Petracca 1986, 211). These linkages may grant durable influence to outside groups, or they may provide an opportunity for policy makers to coopt potential rivals and fend off political threats to executive autonomy (Derthick 1979, 90).

In the domain of national security, Amy Zegart argued that administration-convened blue-ribbon commissions work as promised, collecting information necessary to make important policy decisions (Zegart 2004, 380). Like Tutchings (1979, 33), she claimed that such committees do not simply “rubber stamp” administration policy. In contrast, Kenneth Kitts argued that “national security commissions must be understood as political creatures,” to assist that administration “when the chips are down and the political winds are blowing away from the White House.” Their purpose is more “damage

control” than “fact-finding” (Kitts 2006, 13, 167). Both Kitts and Zegart examined committees that are created in response to some shock, rather than standing FACs that support long-running administrative responsibilities.

I share a common perspective with Kitts, in that it argues in favor of FACs as political instruments, in contrast to the information-gathering venues that Zegart and Tuchings proposed. However, it broadens the scope of inquiry to include all national security FACs, not just short-lived blue-ribbon commissions, which administrations create in reaction to some precipitating event, a scandal or high-profile failure. This article is more structural in its perspective, and it incorporates an analysis of FAC members and their outside affiliations. It shows that interest groups enjoy greater access when the president is politically weak—when the opposition party is ascendant in Congress. This speaks to a distinct mechanism of interest-group influence, different than providing the government with policy-relevant information about the international environment. Their role is rather to solve a domestic political problem and help the administration overcome legislative opposition to its national security agenda.

A few studies have attempted to provide an account of the role that organized special interests play in U.S. national security politics outside of the military procurement process.² Perhaps the most prominent effort in this regard is Jack Snyder’s *Myths of Empire*. Snyder argued that late industrialization leads to cartelization of critical industries, which elevates parochial interests to positions of influence that they use to propagate beliefs in particular myths about the benefits of expansionism (Snyder 1991). However, as an early-industrializing democracy, the United States should remain immune to these pathologies.³ John Mearsheimer and Steven Walt argued that U.S. policy toward Israel/Palestine is dominated by special interests, but they only examined a single case and provided little in the way of systematic theory (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007). Stephen Krasner argued that national security policy makers in the White House and State Department are insulated from the influence of outside actors than in other policy areas (Krasner 1978, 18–19). While this last argument against undue interest group influence comports with the current study, it does not explain what interest groups contribute to national security politics.

The existing literature thus does not systematically explain the role of interest groups in U.S. national security politics. This article advances that process by accounting for the conditions under which outside organizations gain access to national security FACs. I argue that civic associations are more likely to get a seat at the table when the opposition party in Congress is strong and unified. The reasoning behind this proposition stems from the role that interest groups most effectively play in national security politics—provider of public relations assistance for internationally ambitious but domestically weak presidents. This argument follows on the work of Eric Nordlinger, who proposed that outside groups might help bring public opinion into convergence with executive

2. A robust literature exists on the military industrial complex, but that is outside of the scope of the current study. Arms manufacturers have special technical knowledge and expertise by which they operate on a distinct logic relative to other extragovernmental actors.

3. Snyder’s chapter on U.S. involvement in Vietnam engages in a good deal of post hoc theorizing and does not involve interest groups but rather factions within Congress and the executive branch.

preferences in the domain of national security (Nordlinger 1981, 100). I extend and completes the deductive logic necessary to produce generalizable implications and then test the resulting propositions.

National Security Propaganda and Interest Groups

The U.S. executive has legal and political reasons to enlist outside help for public relations in national security politics. Any state facing the need to mobilize its public for war (or policies that risk war) might naturally turn to propaganda, but Congress has tied the executive's hands in this regard ever since the perceived excesses of the Committee on Public Information during World War I. It took the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor to allow President Roosevelt an official propaganda bureau, the Office of War Information (OWI), and even then the agency's budget and autonomy were limited.⁴ When the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 authorized the State Department to pursue a robust public diplomacy program, it also prohibited distributing the associated materials within the U.S. homeland.⁵

Similar restrictions have been attached to various subsequent pieces of legislation. The Dworshak Amendment to the Mutual Security Act of 1952, which replaced the European Recovery Program (i.e., The Marshall Plan), restricted the domestic distribution of propaganda material produced for overseas consumption. The Boland Amendment, which forbade the Reagan administration from providing material aid for the Contras in Nicaragua, also proscribed U.S. government public relations efforts promoting the prohibited assistance. In 1967, when the Johnson administration wanted the government to produce propaganda films to counter the growing public opposition to the Vietnam War, they were thwarted by specific text in the appropriations bill funding the military operations in Southeast Asia.⁶ Existing outside the reach of these laws, external organizations have often provided a conduit through which the administration may launder public relations information to the public without running afoul of legal prohibitions.⁷

Extragovernmental organizations provide more than legal cover for intervention-minded administrations; they provide political cover as well. Their ostensible independence allows them to escape the partisan suspicion that most identifiably political actors would face. Research has shown that the partisan divide in America has less to do with policy disagreement than a personal mistrust of those who identify with the opposing party (Hetherington and Husser 2012, 312; Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012, 405; Hetherington, Long, and Rudolph 2015). Third-party testimony improves the prospect

4. The OWI's freedom of action was so limited that the government organized an external consortium of advertising professionals in the formation of the War Advertising Council, which handled much of the creative work as well as production and distribution of materials. It survives today as the AdCouncil and continues to produce public service announcements for government priorities, though rarely connected to national security.

5. In 2013, legislation relaxed these prohibitions in recognition of their obsolescence in the age of the internet.

6. Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, National Security File (NSF), Country File, Vietnam, Box 99, Memorandum for Walt Rostow and George Christian, October 17, 1967.

7. Although in the case of the Contras, administration officials faced legal action for their role in funneling information through various extragovernmental organizations.

of garnering support from the administration's partisan opponents among the public by avoiding the activation of this animosity.

Outside groups have other credibility advantages; they can legitimize administration policy. Diaspora organizations representing populations in a foreign intervention's target territory can purport to authorize the use of military force as a humanitarian mission. Expert national security analysts can lend credence to a moral argument for a decision that risks the lives of American soldiers and makes them responsible for killing others. Area specialists offer the promise of a more effective intervention based on expert knowledge of a target territory's social and cultural terrain.⁸ All of these advantages provide a credibility boost to an administration working with outside organizations to make the case for intervening abroad.

Interest Groups

The conceptualization of interest groups employed in this study conforms to a commonly used definition in U.S. politics and political sociology literatures. It takes a legal approach: interest groups are formally constituted legal entities, incorporated as nonprofit organizations, pursuing public policy goals. In this sense, "labor" as a social class does not qualify as the subject of analysis, but particular labor unions do. Similarly, for-profit firms are not interest groups, but the associations they form to influence public policy certainly are. They need not engage in lobbying; many associations reject lobbying as a tactic to avoid the financial transparency requirements such activities entail. The exclusion of for-profit firms restricts the scope of analysis to organizations that enjoy credibility advantages without the taint of obvious profit motive but also scopes out most of the military-industrial complex, which operates on its own logic. Many nonprofit organizations have a core mission unrelated to politics, such as universities and medical institutions. These also are not interest groups, although many organizations that might otherwise qualify (think tanks, research institutes, etc.) represent themselves in this manner. These borderline cases prove instructive when individually scrutinized, but for the purposes of this study they are primarily considered as separate from interest groups proper.⁹

Trade associations and the for-profit firms that form their membership may strike some as belonging to the same category of organization, but I treat them as distinct in this study. The Boeing Company and Lockheed Martin Corporation, for example, are both members of the Aerospace Industries Association. Affiliates of these three entities likely share a substantial degree of technical expertise and underlying interests. However, there are reasons why an administration might choose the trade association representative instead of the corporate officer. In appointing a corporation official, the administration grants a selective benefit to a particular for-profit company and not its competitors.¹⁰ All

8. Such promises often go unfulfilled.

9. The empirical analysis that follows makes direct comparisons between associations and institutions (and firms) so that the distinctions among them are given the appropriate attention.

10. Of course, a FAC may have representatives from multiple corporations in the same industry. But for a member-level analysis, each appointment is a rivalrous, zero-sum choice.

else equal, presidents are more likely to do this when they can afford to alienate those companies left out in the cold by appointment decisions.

Associations have certain advantages over firms when the White House is politically weak. In contrast to officers of individual companies, trade group affiliates represent entire industries. They coordinate ideas and actions among networks of constituent corporations. They specialize in public relations and persuasion. They can promote an ideological perspective or sectoral interest without favoring one member-firm over another. They can help the executive build elite public consensus without alienating the appointee affiliate's intrasectoral competition. These associations facilitate collective action and the achievement of broad policy goals. Although they share many underlying material and ideological interests with the for-profit corporations they represent, they exist for the sake of wielding influence during moments of political competition. In contrast, appointing firm representatives seems more appropriate for moments of unified party government when the time comes to distribute the spoils of political power.

National Security

Much of the scholarship in international relations distinguishes between the so-called high politics of national security and the low politics of trade. At the same time, the literature recognizes the fungibility of policy instruments. The ultimate sources of military power include population, technology, and wealth. So anything that facilitates the movement of people, goods, or money among states has the potential to affect the balance of power in the international system. The military instrument may be used as a tool of coercive bargaining, while economic generosity often aims at solidifying alliances. Complex interstate relationships comprise a mixture of high and low politics. Reflecting this, many FACs in the foreign-policy domain address issues of both war and trade. Fungibility aside, individual issue areas can be classified as more or less related to national security rather than economics. Within the subdomain of national security, issue areas vary with respect to their relevance to geopolitical strategy. Veterans' pensions, for example, are an important substantive issue but have little impact on how the United States defines and pursues its grand strategy. Other areas, like procurement, force structure, foreign aid, and nuclear issues, constitute the means by which the United States pursues global power politics, which is the scope of this article.

A Theory of Collaboration

I argue that the executive enlists the aid of extragovernmental organizations less to gather policy-relevant information than to mount a public relations campaign aimed at overcoming congressional opposition. This implies that access is granted to outsiders when they can help the administration achieve its national security objectives, and that interest groups wield power over the public and Congress but not the executive. These propositions are deduced from the literature on the role of information in interest-group influence, the

dominance of the executive branch in national security affairs, and the relative inattention paid by the U.S. public to international politics.

Contrary to much of the conventional wisdom, the political science literature suggests that the principal source of interest-group influence is neither money nor blocs of voters but information (Hansen 1991; Ansolabehere, de Figueiredo, and Snyder 2003, 3; Baumgartner et al. 2009, chap. 10). Outside groups use their informational advantages over legislators within a given policy domain to gain access to the decision-making process. They trade in two types of information. First, by focusing on a narrow range of issues, they develop a degree of technical policy-relevant expertise that remains out of reach to the typical member of Congress, who has limited staff resources and a broad portfolio of issues to which she must attend.¹¹ Second, groups dedicated to the pursuit of a policy agenda become savvy to political strategy, understanding both the landscape of Washington, DC and the public beyond the Beltway. Their advantages allow them to provide a “legislative subsidy,” the information-intensive labor involved in drafting bills and amendments to achieve desired policy outcomes and gain political advantage for cooperative legislators (Hall and Deardorff 2006, 69).

Two assumptions provide a basis for deducing how interest groups operate in U.S. national security politics. First, the executive branch, in particular the president, has the initiative in matters of national security (Wildavsky 1966; Moe and Howell 1999, 155; Schlesinger 2004; Canes-Wrone, Howell, and Lewis 2008, 1). Ralph Carter, who explored “foreign policy entrepreneurship” by members of Congress, proceeded from the premise that “they are treading a path selected by relatively few of their colleagues” (2009, 25). On the infrequent occasion that Congress takes the initiative, its efforts often amount to little more than a performative “symbolic display” of foreign-policy leadership (Hinckley 1994, 5). The reason generally given for congressional reticence to engage energetically in foreign affairs invokes David Mayhew’s logic of electoral incentives. District- and state-level constituencies give little credit to representatives and senators who achieve foreign-policy goals, so members generally neglect these issue areas (Mayhew 1974).

To be sure, some scholars have contested the notion that the executive dominates foreign policy (Abshire and Nurnberger 1981; Jones and Marini 1988; Crovitz and Rabkin 1989; Ripley and Lindsay 1993). James Lindsay claimed that the electoral disconnect is a fallacy; members of Congress benefit from claiming credit over issues that matter to interest groups, not just their district or state constituencies (Lindsay 1994, 4). This is true. But claiming that it undermines the “two presidencies” thesis presumes that the interest-group ecology in national security is as robust as it is in the domestic policy domain. Helen Milner and Dustin Tingley challenged this presumption, showing that the instruments of military policy create fewer of the distributional consequences that facilitate the formation of interest groups (Milner and Tingley 2015, 78). This simultaneously restricts the supply of private organizations engaged in national security politics and reduces the number of their targets of influence. Those national security groups that manage to emerge must prove themselves valuable sources of information to policy makers in the executive.

11. See Krehbiel (1992) for another solution to the information overload problem in the U.S. Congress, the committee system.

Congressional foreign-policy leadership is rare but not entirely absent. Individual members sometimes seek the prestige of national security politics or respond to a sense of duty (Lindsay 1994, 43), and even Mayhew acknowledged that congressional aspirants to the Oval Office may pursue a foreign-policy agenda as an opportunity to prove their leadership capabilities, burnish their credentials, and enhance their national reputations (Mayhew 1974, 76). Additionally, individual members may have their own strong preferences over foreign policy issues, regardless of their constituents' priorities, but such people are not the norm in Congress. Ultimately, this first assumption rests not on a binary determination of whether presidents have exclusive authority over foreign policy but rather on the degree to which they lead. Relative to domestic policy, national security runs primarily on executive initiative.

The second assumption is that the national security apparatus has at its disposal means of gathering technical, policy-relevant information surpassing or equal to anything that outside organizations could reasonably muster. In contrast to congressional offices, with their limited personnel, the president is served by scores of advisory staff within the Executive Office of the President (including the National Security Council) and thousands of agents dedicated to analyzing foreign conflicts and threats to national security. Together, these two assumptions imply the loss of interest groups' informational advantages, rendering one facet of their influence, the exchange of technical information, less effective.

Under these assumptions, political information remains important for three reasons. First, though Congress rarely takes the initiative in national security politics, it acts as a constraint against presidential autonomy. Congressional resistance arises from partisan competition. When opposition parties hold larger, more unified majorities in both the House and Senate, they push back harder against military interventions sought by the president (Howell and Pevehouse 2007). Even as initiator, the administration must secure congressional consent for any program that requires a substantial amount of time or money; the War Powers Resolution limits the time a military deployment may last without legislative consent, and discretionary funds go only so far before special appropriations become necessary. Interest groups may have creative political solutions for presidents facing congressional opposition. Second, the public's inattention to matters of foreign policy make them ready targets for an interventionist propaganda campaign. The administration's legal and political options are limited in this regard, so they have strong incentives to welcome extragovernmental assistance. Once persuaded, the public becomes a lever against congressional resistance. Third, members of Congress may mount their own public relations efforts against the administration, making third-party persuasion campaigns more valuable still (Ripley and Lindsay 1993).

The ultimate goal being legislative authorization and appropriation of funds, the importance of interest groups depends on the strength of congressional opposition. As Howell and Pevehouse (2007) show, opposition-party power in Congress reliably predicts how much legislative constraint the president faces in matters of national security. By a similar logic, the current theory proposes that interest-group access negatively correlates to presidential party power in the legislature. The next section provides systematic evidence for this proposition.

FAC Appointments, 1997–2012

Recognizing the prospect, real or merely perceived, of undue special interest influence, President Obama first discouraged the appointment or reappointment of federally registered lobbyists to FACs in 2009, then banned them a year later. Still, representatives of major corporations, trade associations, labor organizations, and various other interest groups continue to populate FACs on a regular basis. In 1972, Congress passed the Federal Advisory Committee Act so that “the Congress and the public should be kept informed with respect to the number, purpose, membership, activities, and cost of advisory committees” (Federal Advisory Committee Act 1972). The act requires that the executive regularly report a range of data on FACs to the General Services Administration (GSA). Beginning with the year 1997, these data are available for public download. I conduct the empirical analysis in this study using a data set of my own construction based on these data.¹²

The FAC database has two important virtues that distinguish it from other sources. It identifies the extragovernmental affiliation of committee members, and because most appointments are made by the executive, we can infer agency on the part of the administration in each member’s selection. Other data provide one piece of information or the other, but not both. Lobbying disclosure data tell us the clients on whose behalf government contact is made but not whether the administration has chosen those affiliates for special treatment. Employment data on political appointees tell us whom the administration has chosen for work in the executive, but privacy law censors most information about the prior external affiliations of bureaucratic employees. Even if one were able to discover past affiliations of government personnel, FAC data are more complete because they tell us the contemporaneous external affiliations. One need not assume that employees remain faithful to the goals entailed in past affiliations.

These data permit testing the core proposition of the theory that interest groups enjoy greater opportunities for influence when the administration needs more help to overcome political opposition to its national security agenda. The data are not granular enough to identify specific policy initiatives, such as a planned military intervention, and determine which policy pursuits motivate the enlistment of extragovernmental organizations. However, they do allow us to observe general conditions that increase the demand for political assistance. While the presidency enjoys substantial autonomy in national security politics, Congress asserts itself more actively when the party in opposition to the president holds greater unified power in the legislative branch. The following analysis demonstrates that interest-group access to national security FACs increases as the president’s party loses power in Congress.

Data

The source data include every FAC outside of the CIA and the Federal Reserve for each year in which they were convened, listing the name, parent agency, and each appointed

12. Data are available in Microsoft Access format at <https://facadatabase.gov/downloadcenter.aspx>. Data are available through 2014, but the current analysis only covers the period ending with 2012.

member for each year in which they served. This allows analysis at the committee and member level. At both of these levels, the database includes attributes that facilitate testing the theory. The results support the proposition that the executive enlists affiliates of associations to counteract the president's political weakness.

Dependent Variable

The current analysis seeks to explain appointments of interest-group affiliates to national security FACs. FACs draw their membership from both the public and private sectors, as employees of business firms, government at various jurisdictional strata, the military, academic institutions, and nonprofit associations. The analysis operationalizes interest-group affiliation as employment by nonprofit associations with an explicit political purpose, determined by organization type.

This analysis seeks to explain the determinants of interest-group appointments to FACs. To measure this outcome, I determine the type of organization with which each appointee is affiliated outside of his/her role on the committee. These data were derived from the member-level Occupation or Affiliation variable discussed below. They reflect the corporate form the affiliate organization takes. In this categorization, associations are generally membership groups that provide a service to their members or by their members to a target population. Relief organizations, trade associations, labor unions, professional associations, and associations of government employees are all in this category. Second are for-profit firms that produce goods or provide professional services, from manufacturing and engineering to staffing and management consulting. Third, government officials at the federal, state and local, tribal and territorial, and international levels are in the same organization type. Military, active duty, education and training, and retired or family relations are a separate category from civilian government. Finally, I include a category, separate from associations, for institutions. Some, such as academic institutions, are easy to identify. Policy-research institutes, on the other hand, are often difficult to distinguish from issue-advocacy associations. I have made a judgment call based on a review of the corporate materials available online, classifying as policy-research institutions any group with exclusive recruitment that produces quasi-scholarly literature on a broad range of topics and as issue-advocacy associations any group with a narrow policy agenda and an open membership policy.¹³ Interest groups are most closely related to associations in this framework, with institutions capturing some of the concept as well (Table 1).

13. Data have been coded on the basis of the author's judgement alone. The reader would be correct in raising the question of reliability, which might have been resolved by employing multiple coders and measuring intercoder reliability. However, distinguishing between broad-based policy research institutes and associations seeking to shape policy within a narrowly defined set of interests involves little subjective bias. Collapsing these categories into a single one has some substantive merit because think tanks often associate closely with an industrial sector or political ideology and therefore operated under the same logic of access. But separating "impartial, legitimate, or objective" research institutes from those with biased motivations would introduce a great deal more subjectivity into the coding process, negatively impacting reliability. I have run the statistical models with the collapsed category, and the results are substantively similar. The effects are somewhat smaller in magnitude but remain highly significant.

TABLE 1
Federal Advisory Committee Appointments by Organization Type

<i>Organization Type</i>	<i>Committees</i>	<i>Committee-Years</i>	<i>Appointments</i>
Association	44	328	1,693
Institution	47	436	1,920
Firm	47	431	3,874
Independent	45	277	723
Military	24	165	394
Government	43	367	1,918
Unknown	26	129	334
Grand Total	55	563	10,866

Independent Variables

The current theory proposes two conditions that improve the chances of interest-group appointment to FACs. First, as the president's party decreases in power within Congress, the administration has stronger incentives to enlist the assistance of interest groups to help solve their political problems. Second, this incentive applies most completely to FACs that deal in issues of global power politics.

Presidential Party Power. To take the measure of presidential weakness, I calculate the power of the president's party in Congress, tracking how much legislative resistance the administration faces in the implementation of policy.¹⁴ The measure takes into account the size of the president's co-partisan caucus (or conference) in each chamber and the unity with which each votes on legislative proposals. For each chamber, the equation below determines the Presidential Party Power value. Φ represents the party size by percentage of members in each chamber, and Θ represents their party unity score, a function of the number of "party unity votes"—those roll calls wherein at least half of each party opposes at least half of the other—and the proportion of legislators voting faithfully with their party's majority. Subscripts refer to the president's party or the opposition. I use party membership and roll-call voting unity data provided by Howard Rosenthal and Keith Poole.¹⁵ I merge the member and committee data with presidential party power values based on the fiscal year of the committee-year assignment and the two-year span of the convened Congress (Figure 1).

Global Power Politics. Among the subset of FACs that operate in the domain of national security—identified by the "interest area and category" data described below—only some are of geopolitical importance. Many of them deal with issues that do not implicate security competition among countries. Some, for example, deal with human resources issues such as gender and racial discrimination within the armed forces—primarily domestic political issues playing out within the military—that are less ambitious than

14. I use the same adapted version of the LPPC scores used by Howell and Pevehouse (2007), based on Brady, Cooper, and Hurley (1979).

15. Available at www.voteview.com.

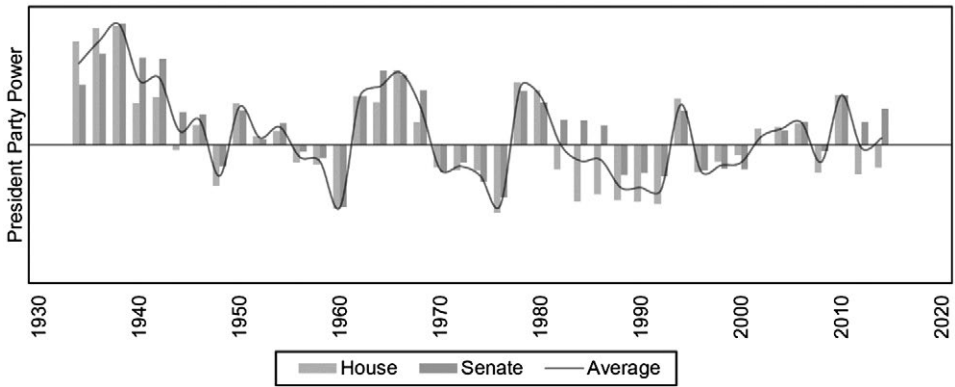


FIGURE 1. President party power (1933 – 2014). $PresPower = \frac{\Phi_{pres} \times \Theta_{pres} - \Phi_{appa} \times \Theta_{appa}}{100}$.

those dealing with nuclear weapons, grand strategy, and the balance of international power. I have coded national security committees as belonging to one of 11 issue areas within national security. Issue areas are included or excluded in the power politics category or not, as a measure of FAC involvement in ambitious projects. The seven included issue areas are Armed Services, Culture & Heritage, Environment, Law & Aid, Nuclear Issues, Security Strategy, and Technology & Procurement. Culture & Heritage is included to reflect the strategic significance of soft power (Nye 2005). Environment and Law & Aid FACs deal with issues relating to climate change and the command of the commons, which represent important aspects of U.S. grand strategy (Art 2004, 31–36; Posen 2003). The four excluded issue areas are Business & Trade, Human Resources, Homeland, and Education & Training.¹⁶

Committee Attributes. The GSA source database includes various attributes about the FACs it covers. This permits identifying which committees address issues of national security, their function, and the mechanism by which officials have authorized their formation and renewal. These attributes provide information about which committees to include in the analysis.

Interest Area and Category. The committees are identified by the GSA as having one or more interest areas designating the policy issues the FAC intends to address. These 166 interest areas are grouped into 41 interest categories, including Food and Drugs, Transportation, and Science and Technology, for example.¹⁷ The core of this analysis focuses on FACs related to two categories, National Defense and International, dealing with five interest areas, International Programs, Studies, and Diplomacy; International Law; International Organizations; International Economic Policy; and National Security and Defense and Overseas Security Issues (Table 2).

16. This in no way implies that these issues are less important, only that they do not reflect presidential ambitions in the scope of activity of interest to this study. See the Appendix for a list of FACs that are included and excluded from the Global Power Politics group.

17. See the Appendix for a full listing of interest categories. Committees may have more than one interest area and category. One committee, the Proposal Review Panel for Information and Intelligent Systems, has 28 associated categories of interest.

TABLE 2
Federal Advisory Committees by Foreign-Policy Interest Category

<i>Interest Category</i>	<i>Committees</i>	<i>Committee-Years</i>	<i>Appointments</i>
National Security	36	365	7,085
International Diplomacy	31	333	6,746
Foreign Trade	62	574	13,418
Any Foreign Policy	100	979	20,803
No Foreign Policy	556	4,707	374,939

Committee Function. The database indicates one of seven committee functions for each FAC in a given fiscal year.¹⁸ Committee functions can change from year to year, but they rarely do. These attributes indicate what kind of recommendations or advice the FAC expects to produce—major policy changes, scientific program advice, grant-making recommendations, and others. I confine my analysis to Non-Scientific Program Advisory Boards, National Policy Issue Advisory Boards, and Special Emphasis Panels.

Establishment Authority. Each committee-year has indicated an “establishment authority” in one of four possible categories. Committees may be authorized by law, where Congress has granted explicit permission to the executive to convene a committee. They may be mandated by statute, created by an act of Congress that cannot be ignored by the executive. They may be created under agency authority alone; many agencies have broad powers to convene FACs as necessary. Finally, they may be created by presidential decree. I include committees of all four such designations in the analysis.

Member Attributes. The GSA-supplied source data include critical information about appointees to FACs. Because the theory reflects a logic of administrative selection, it matters whether Congress or the executive appoints committee members. Even more important, interest-group access works through its affiliates gaining membership to FACs.

Appointment Type. For each year a member sits on a committee, the data include his/her appointment type to indicate by whose recommendation she/he came to serve. A plurality of FAC members are already employees of the federal executive and serve on an *ex officio* basis, noted in the database as Federal Employee Member. Other appointment types include Agency, Congressional, Presidential, Judicial, or Other. The overwhelming majority of appointments are made by the agency to which the FAC is assigned.

Occupation or Affiliation

The data include the current occupation or professional affiliation for each member appointed to each committee, a point of critical interest to the current analysis. In the database provided by the GSA, this field has over 136,000 variants—presumably entered as

18. Also listed in the Appendix.

free-form text. This usually includes the organization, agency, or corporation that employs the appointee and often includes the position the appointee holds in that organization. There is little uniformity or order imposed on this aspect of the data. After filtering on Interest Category and Establishment Authority as described above, I reviewed each of the remaining distinct affiliation descriptions and coded them on the basis of 47 possible affiliation types of my own devising.¹⁹ These data allow me to code the “organization type” dependent variable above.

Control Variables

I include a package of control variables that might affect the composition of FACs. Presidents with low public approval ratings may use FAC appointments to bolster the administration’s image in a particular policy domain, in this case global power politics. The number of interest categories that a FAC addresses could have an impact on the appointment of interest groups, especially if the purpose of extragovernmental membership is to facilitate elite coordination and logrolling.²⁰ Committees originally established during wartime might have stricter rules about extragovernmental eligibility. FACs established by legislative action might offer the executive less agency in the use of committees for political purposes. FAC composition might vary in relation to the importance of the committee, measured by the number of days a committee meets, the costs of convening the committee, or whether it attracts coverage in the news media.²¹ Presidents in the first years of their term might need less external political help, one of the benefits of a honeymoon period. Political considerations are more salient in election years, which might yield greater interest-group access than nonelection years. Presidential election years might be especially active. There may be systematic differences between the two major parties. Finally, the Global War on Terror might affect the chances that extragovernmental organizations gain access to FACs.

Results

The results indicate strong support for the hypothesis that interest-group access increases as presidential party power decreases. At the committee level, the correlation between interest-group appointment counts and presidential party power is negative and significant. Likewise, the probability of an association affiliate securing an appointment to a national security FAC is also negatively and significantly correlated with presidential party power. Results are robust to a variety of model specifications and substantively important. Within an historically normal range of values on presidential party power, the predicted

19. There were roughly four thousand remaining distinct affiliation descriptions. See the Appendix for a random sampling of 50 affiliations and a full listing of affiliation types.

20. Zegart (2004) called these “political constellation committees”—their purpose being to “foster consensus among competing interests.”

21. I use a dummy variable for whether the *New York Times* mentions the committee by name during the time period of each observation.

probability of such an appointee being affiliated with an interest group increases from roughly 25 to 70 percent for party power in the Senate, and from 30 to just over 60 percent for party power in the House.

To test the core hypothesis of the theory, I first regress presidential party power (*PresPower*) interacted with a dummy for global power politics (*PowerPol*) and a vector of controls on the number of association-affiliated appointees (Λ) within the various committees over time.²²

$$\Lambda_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{PowerPol}_i \times \text{PresPower}_t + \beta_2 X_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$

I use a negative binomial panel model to track variation in appointment counts within committees across years, accommodating overdispersion in the dependent variable ($\bar{\mu} = 3.01$, $s^2 = 23.99$), with random effects to allow for time-invariant controls. A Hausman specification test without control variables yields a χ^2 of 0.48 and a p value of .993, failing to reject the null hypothesis that the fixed-effects coefficients are not systematically different than the random-effects coefficients.

The results support the hypothesized determinants of interest-group selection for FAC appointments. As shown in Table 3, FACs that address issues of global power politics see a significant decline in association-affiliated appointments when the president's party power increases. Few of the control variables yield significant results. Presidential approval behaves in the opposite manner as presidential party power, increasing the number of interest-group appointees to global power politics committees as the president's ratings improve. Republican presidents have a higher rate of interest group appointees and the number of interest categories might produce a slightly higher rate as well. I argue that these findings taken together support the proposition that the executive seeks interest-group assistance when it is politically weak relative to Congress.

To show that the revealed relationships are particular to this kind of organization, I run the same model for affiliates of institutions and for-profit firms (Table 4).²³ Institutional members move in opposition to associational members with respect to the principal variables of interest. These results suggest a few more things. First, while the model does a good job of making sense of association-affiliated appointments, it does little to help bring order to the data regarding institutions and firms, suggesting different logics governing access by these kinds of organizations. Second, the Global War on Terror seems to have no effect on appointments to across organization types. Third, there seems to be a difference between the two parties when it comes to appointing association affiliates and institution affiliates, with Republican presidents selecting more of the first and fewer of the second. Fourth, groups established in wartime may offer greater opportunities for access to for-profit firm affiliates. Finally, the number of interest categories has no significant relation to the kind of occupations chosen for FAC membership.²⁴

22. In this model, I use the average *PresPower* across the two congressional chambers.

23. The fully specified model was run for each value on the dependent variable. Results presented only include items of interest for the sake of simplicity of presentation.

24. The α level for significance is .05. At an α of .10, the coefficient on the number of interest categories is significant but small.

TABLE 3
Interest-Group Access to Federal Advisory Committees

IV	DV: Count of Association Members				
	β	σ	$p <$		95% CI
Global Power Politics (PowerPol)	-0.14	0.49	0.772	-1.09	→ 0.81
Presidential Party Power(PresPower)	1.32	0.57	0.021	0.20	→ 2.44
PowerPol × PresPower	-2.42	0.69	0.000	-3.77	→ -1.07
90-dayApprovalMargin (AppMarg90)	-0.34	0.18	0.057	-0.69	→ 0.01
PowerPol × AppMarg90	0.80	0.23	0.000	0.35	→ 1.25
# Interest Categories	0.04	0.02	0.070	-0.00	→ 0.09
Established in Wartime	-0.21	0.54	0.697	-1.27	→ 0.85
Established by Legislature	0.52	0.48	0.276	-0.42	→ 1.47
# Meeting Days	-0.00	0.00	0.420	-0.00	→ 0.00
Cost, ln \$US	0.05	0.05	0.282	-0.04	→ 0.14
NYTimes Coverage Dummy	0.33	0.27	0.207	-0.19	→ 0.85
New Presidential Year	-0.07	0.09	0.455	-0.24	→ 0.11
Election Year	-0.12	0.07	0.090	-0.26	→ 0.02
Presidential Election Year	0.05	0.09	0.532	-0.11	→ 0.22
Republican President	0.12	0.06	0.040	0.01	→ 0.24
Global War on Terror	-0.08	0.10	0.406	-0.28	→ 0.11
Intercept	3.18	1.01	0.002	1.20	→ 5.17
Wald X^2	43.25				
$p < X^2$	0.0003				
Groups	54				
Observations	560				

Random Effects Negative Binomial Regression (Panel: Committee by Year)

Moving from the committee level down to a member-level analysis further confirms the proposition. I run a series of panel logit regressions with a reduced set of control variables, and the substantive results hold. The larger number of observations with member appointments as the unit of analysis allows more precise estimates and comparisons between the two houses of Congress. Because government and military members give us no insight into the strategy of extragovernmental appointment, they are excluded from the logit analysis. In this setting, a slightly different reduced form model yields additional information.²⁵ Once again, a Hausman test validates the use of random effects ($\chi^2 = 2.04$

25. Various specifications are available in the Appendix. The core substantive finding remains significant and substantively consistent across models.

TABLE 4
Interest-Group Access in Context

	<i>DV: Count of Members</i>		
	<i>ASSN</i>	<i>INST</i>	<i>FIRM</i>
PowerPol × PresPower	-2.42*** (0.69)	1.19* (0.60)	0.49 (0.42)
PowerPol × AppMarg90	0.80*** (0.23)	-0.39 (0.21)	-0.18 (0.15)
# Interest Categories	0.04 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Election Year	-0.12 (0.07)	-0.02 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.04)
Republican President	0.12* (0.06)	-0.16** (0.05)	-0.00 (0.04)
Wald χ^2	43.25***	30.61*	27.26*
Groups		54	
Observations		560	

Random Effects Negative Binomial Regression (Panel: Committee by Year)

Standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

and p value = .361 for Senate values of PresPower; $\chi^2 = 0.37$ and p value = .832 for House values).

Table 5 shows that the president's political strength negatively correlates with probability of interest-group appointment to global power politics FACs. The effect is larger but slightly less efficient in the Senate than in the House of Representatives. Legislative involvement in the establishment of committees is also negatively associated with interest-group membership, as are election years. Republican administrations are more likely to appoint association-affiliated personnel. Little can be inferred from this model applied to institution affiliates, but employees of business firms appear to gain greater access to the Senate under greater presidential party power. This suggests a calculation of political utility consistent with the notion that business firms and trade associations represent alternatives to each other, that associations offer greater value under certain conditions. When faced with political challenges, administrations appoint association representatives who can build consensus among competitors. When government is unified, the president has greater opportunity to distribute the rewards of political victory without concern over alienating competing firms.

To facilitate a more intuitive interpretation of these results, I generate graphical representations of the predicted probabilities of association-affiliated appointments over a normal range of values on PresPower. Random effects are held at zero. Independent covariates are set at means for continuous variables and modes for binary variables. The results are compelling. They reveal a substantively important increase in the probability of interest-group access to the executive as the president faces greater and more unified opposition in Congress, with a more pronounced effect in the upper chamber. Figure 2 shows that moving from a Senate PresPower value of .2 to -.2 predicts an increase in probability from just over .2 to .7. PresPower in the House predicts an increase in probability from about .3 to .6 over the same range.

TABLE 5
Federal Advisory Committee Access at the Member Level

	DV: Probability of Appointment							
	ASSN		INST		FIRM			
	Senate	House	Senate	House	Senate	House	Senate	House
PowerPol	2.77*** (0.72)	2.62*** (0.72)	1.14 (0.75)	1.17 (0.74)	-2.29*** (0.44)	-2.17*** (0.43)	-2.29*** (0.44)	-2.17*** (0.43)
PresPower	1.33* (0.57)	1.32 (0.74)	0.75 (0.65)	0.03 (0.49)	-2.54* (1.01)	-1.64*** (0.38)	-2.54* (1.01)	-1.64*** (0.38)
PowerPol × PresPower	-6.27** (2.30)	-4.73*** (1.04)	0.58 (1.47)	1.31 (0.66)	4.82*** (1.23)	1.23 (0.66)	4.82*** (1.23)	1.23 (0.66)
AppMarg90	-0.28 (0.15)	-0.50* (0.20)	0.21 (0.24)	0.13 (0.26)	0.50 (0.54)	0.85 (0.65)	0.50 (0.54)	0.85 (0.65)
PowerPol × AppMarg90	1.16 (1.01)	2.17 (1.27)	-0.92 (0.45)	-1.05* (0.51)	-0.57 (0.74)	-1.11 (0.87)	-0.57 (0.74)	-1.11 (0.87)
Established by Leg.	-2.40* (1.13)	-2.48* (1.14)	-0.56 (1.31)	-0.57 (1.31)	1.62* (0.79)	1.70* (0.79)	1.62* (0.79)	1.70* (0.79)
Election Year	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.13*** (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)	0.04 (0.03)	0.02 (0.06)	-0.01 (0.07)	0.02 (0.06)	-0.01 (0.07)
Republican President	0.71* (0.28)	0.74* (0.33)	-0.34 (0.19)	-0.37 (0.20)	-0.20 (0.17)	-0.16 (0.22)	-0.20 (0.17)	-0.16 (0.22)
Intercept	-2.98*** (0.68)	-2.95*** (0.69)	-1.95*** (0.54)	-1.93*** (0.53)	-0.29 (0.32)	0.22 (0.32)	-0.29 (0.32)	0.22 (0.32)
Wald X ²	106.8***	96.0***	13.3	16.2*	61.5***	134.0***	61.5***	134.0***
Groups	18							
Observations	3374							

Note: Random Effects Logit Regression (Panel: Committee). Robust standard errors in parentheses.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

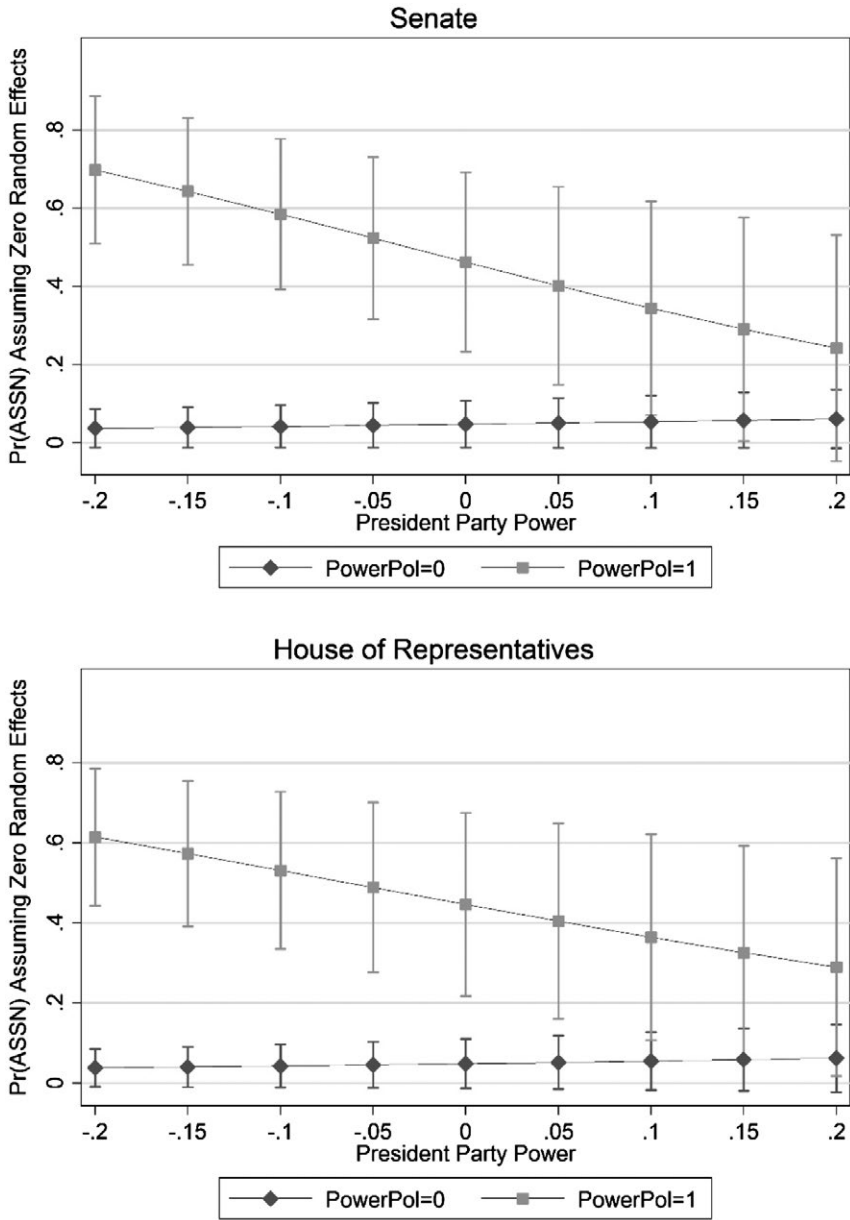


FIGURE 2. Predicted probabilities (95 percent confidence interval).

Figure 3 plots the predicted probabilities for nine historical moments of interest.²⁶ At the low end of presidential party power, Gerald Ford faced a post-Watergate Congress in 1975 that included a veto-proof Democratic majority in the House and a filibuster-proof opposition in the Senate, elected three short months after his inauguration. George H. W. Bush faced Democratic majorities in both chambers in 1991 as he waged

26. For this plot, I use the two-chamber average of PresPower.

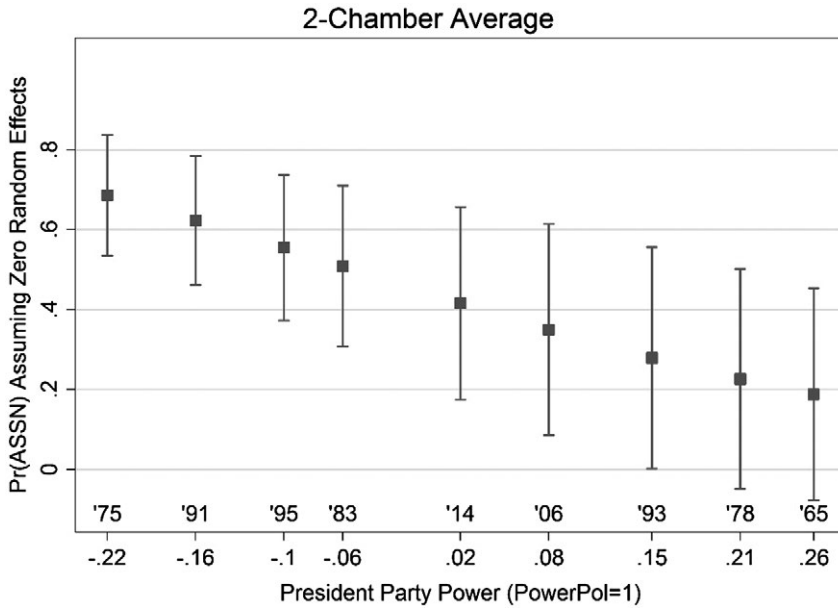


FIGURE 3. Example probabilities (95 percent confidence interval).

war against Iraq. In 1995 Bill Clinton was pitted against Newt Gingrich’s Contract with America. In 1983 Ronald Reagan held office under a divided legislature as his administration pursued the Strategic Defense Initiative and anti-Communist interventions in the Americas. The most recent data in this analysis place Barack Obama near the center of the range in 2014. George W. Bush’s Republican party held both houses but by modest margins in 2006 when he announced the “Surge” in Iraq, just before the Democrats reclaimed Congress decisively. In 1993, prior to the Contract with America, Clinton’s party had a majority in both houses, as did Jimmy Carter’s in 1978.²⁷ At the high end of the range, Lyndon Johnson enjoyed a large filibuster-proof majority in the Senate and a House Democratic Caucus of roughly the same proportion.

The results show that the core proposition holds in both committee- and member-level analyses. However, the model specifications used in the analysis invite possible criticism for their implementation and interpretation of interaction terms. Interactions themselves are fairly uncontroversial, but Braumoeller (2004) argued that interacting two separate variables against the same term often requires including a third-order interaction among all three and the implied lower-order effects as well. I see no theoretical reason to interact Presidential Party Power against Approval Margin, as I believe they work independently of one another, and including third and additional second-order interactions would complicate interpretation. However, I include Table E1 in the Appendix as a revised model with only the interaction between Global Power Politics and Presidential

27. Carter began his presidency with a filibuster-proof Senate majority, but lost both members of the Minnesota delegation and one from Mississippi during the course of 1978. Hubert Humphrey passed away in January, and the other two resigned.

Party Power (excluding the interaction of Global Power Politics and Approval Margin), and the results are substantially unchanged.

Additionally, Hainmueller, Mummolo, and Xu (2016) argued that multiplicative interaction models rely on assumptions that do not always hold, such as linearity of interaction effects. I also include Table E2 in the Appendix as a revision of the model without interaction terms, using a segmented sample that includes only observations with values of Global Power Politics equaling one. The results hold, as they do with variants of the model using fixed instead of random effects. These exercises in robustness demonstrate that the results reported in this analysis do not arise from any particular modeling choice and hold under a variety of specifications.

Discussion

This analysis sheds light on an important but underexplored area of national security politics in the contemporary United States. FAC provide an avenue by which interest groups gain access to the institutions of governance. The data compiled on FAC appointments between 1997 and 2012 provide strong support for the theory's core proposition. Association affiliates are appointed to national security FACs in greater numbers when the president is politically weak relative to Congress. I suggest that these appointments are motivated by the need to gain leverage over the legislature by mobilizing public support. However, confirming that these appointees have an explicit mandate from the White House to craft and implement a public relations strategy requires more detailed case study that is beyond the scope of this analysis.

This study does not provide answers to several important related questions. First, it remains possible that associations are brought in for other reasons. The administration may be using FAC appointments as a side payment, a way to induce elite civil society buy-in for its policies, rather than public support. FACs, in other words, could be venues for logrolling and issue linkage. In fact, the distinction between trade associations and their constituent for-profit firms is premised on the idea that associations can provide coordination among competitors, that this reflects an effort at logrolling. I would argue instead that while these FAC appointments involve elite coordination, these decisions are more a matter of building consensus around a political strategy than vote trading or issue linkage. If it were otherwise, we might expect the number of interest categories to be positively associated with access. Nevertheless, the lack of significance on that coefficient in the regression results does not negate this possibility.

Second, national security is not the only domain in which the president use extra-governmental organizations as partners. The scope conditions applied here may be relaxed to discover similar or distinct patterns of behavior in other issue areas. I would expect that the relationship would be more difficult to detect in other policy domains. Because Congress plays a more assertive role in domestic policy, interest groups would have greater informational advantages over the relevant policy makers. They would have more paths to influence. With those avenues restored, a wider variety of groups would gain access and would engage in a broader range of activities. The public relations function would

remain, but it would be mixed in with others, obscuring the relationship found in this study. Not only can the interest-category condition be relaxed so too can the restriction on committee function. I would expect, for example, that technical-scientific FACs would not be as fruitful a venue for associations providing public relations assistance. Instead of scoping out these committee functions, an analysis could control for them and serve as a useful point of comparison. Still, the current study makes an important contribution, and these scope conditions help to reduce causal heterogeneity that demands more complex analysis and more detailed data than are presently available.

Third, this study does not systematically address issues that separate the two major political parties or ideologies. In choosing to define my categories of affiliation based on the legal corporate status of members' employers, I have grouped together ideological opponents (labor unions and trade associations) and separated allies (trade associations and business firms). A different categorization strategy could answer several interesting questions. Do FAC appointments help clarify party coalitions? Do labor organizations and environmentalists, both elements of the Democratic establishment, follow coherent patterns of appointment? Are trade associations more likely to gain appointments alongside business firms in the same industry than their fellow civil society organizations with dissimilar agendas? I would expect that such patterns would indeed emerge. Do presidents facing congressional opposition choose allies to mobilize their own base of support, or do they attempt to coopt the opposition by choosing their own ideological rivals? I find a compelling logic on either side of the question of base mobilization and cooptation, so the answer would be illuminating. Is the rise of hyperpartisanship reflected in committee appointments, and is public relations assistance in this arena of political activity still a viable strategic choice? I would argue that civil society becomes even more important in this polarized environment because private organizations can plausibly claim independence from partisan politics, as evidenced by the frequent claim to "nonpartisan" status among interest groups. They can avert the partisan animosity that most politicians cannot. This study suggests that FAC data offer a promising basis for further research into these questions.

Finally, though FACs are an important venue for interest-group access to power, there are other means for achieving influence. Further research into these data, merged with data on lobbying, campaign expenditures, and public commentary under the APA, might lead to further important discoveries. Administrations also involve interest groups in ways that fall outside the purview of the APA, the Lobbying Disclosure Act or Honest Leadership and Open Government Act, and the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Administrations facing strong opposition both in Congress and among the public may choose a venue with less scrutiny and oversight. Vice President Dick Cheney, for example, allegedly involved Iraqi National Congress founder Ahmed Chalabi in the meetings of his energy task force in 2001, whose participants were never officially disclosed (Suskind 2004; Montgomery 2005). During President Reagan's administration, the White House Office of Public Liaison held regular message-planning meetings with hundreds of interest-group representatives under the auspices of the Outreach Working Group on Central America (Clines 1984). Understanding the full scope of collaboration between the White House and extragovernmental organizations will require a multifaceted research approach that extends

beyond FACs. Still, the current study shows that there is a systematic relationship between the president's political fortunes and interest-group access to national security FACs.

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Appendix

A. Interest Categories

Agriculture	Energy	Medicine
Animals	Environment	National Defense
Applied Science	Federal Employment	Rehabilitation
Arts	Finance	Research
Aviation	Food and Drugs	Retirement
Basic Science	Government	Science and Technology
Business	Health	Social Sciences
Civil Rights	Honorary Award	Space
Communications	Housing and Urban	Tax
Computer Technology	International	Trade
Data	Justice	Transportation
Education	Labor	Veterans
Eligibility	Land	Water
Emergency	Legislation	

B. Committee Functions

Non Scientific Program Advisory Board	Other
Scientific Technical Program Advisory Board	Regulatory Negotiations
National Policy Issue Advisory Board	Special Emphasis Panel
Grant Review	

C. Affiliation Types, Organization Types, and Resource Types

Association - Civic and Recreational	Firm - Energy and Natural Resources
Association - Environmental	Firm - Food and Beverage
Association - Ethnic	Firm - Health and Pharmaceutical
Association - Government	Firm - Investment and Insurance
Association - Issue Advocacy	Firm - Legal
Association - Labor	Firm - Logistics and Security
Association - Military and Veterans	Firm - Manufacturing and Engineering
Association - Political	Firm - Media and Entertainment
Association - Professional	Firm - Other
Association - Relief and Service	Firm - Public Relations and Strategy
Association - Religious and Moral Action	Firm - Shipping and Trade
Association - Trade	Firm - Management Consulting and Staffing
Firm - Agriculture and Chemicals	Firm - Technology and Telecommunications
Firm - Consumer and Retail	Firm - Travel and Hospitality
Government - Federal Executive	Institution - Medical
Government - Federal Judiciary	Institution - Policy Research
Government - Federal Legislature	Institution - Religious
Government - Foreign and Intergovernmental	Institution - Social Welfare
Government - State and Local	Institution - Technical Research
Government - Tribal and Territorial	Military - Active
Institution - Academic	Military - Education and Training
Institution - Cultural	Military - Retired and Family
Institution - Grant Making	Other - Independent
	Other - Unknown

D. Global Power Politics FACs

<i>Committee Name</i>	<i>Issue Area</i>
<i>Included</i>	
Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel	Armed Services
National Maritime Security Advisory Committee	Armed Services
Navigation Safety Advisory Council	Armed Services
Secretary of the Navy Advisory Panel	Armed Services
Towing Safety Advisory Committee	Armed Services
Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation	Culture & Heritage

<i>Committee Name</i>	<i>Issue Area</i>
Cultural Property Advisory Committee	Culture & Heritage
Federal Advisory Committee on International Exhibitions	Culture & Heritage
Advisory Committee on International Law	Environment, Law, & Aid
Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid	Environment, Law, & Aid
Advisory Panel to the United States Section of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission	Environment, Law, & Aid
Defense Environmental Response Task Force	Environment, Law, & Aid
Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative Advisory Committee	Environment, Law, & Aid
Governmental Advisory Committee to the United States Representative to the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation	Environment, Law, & Aid
National Advisory Committee to the United States Representative to the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation	Environment, Law, & Aid
Outer Continental Shelf Policy Committee	Environment, Law, & Aid
Preservation Technology and Training Board	Environment, Law, & Aid
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee	Environment, Law, & Aid
Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on Private International Law	Environment, Law, & Aid
Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future	Nuclear Issues
Joint Advisory Committee on Nuclear Weapons Surety	Nuclear Issues
Secretary of State's Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Advisory Board	Nuclear Issues
U.S. Nuclear Command and Control System Comprehensive Review Committee	Nuclear Issues
Advisory Committee on Democracy Promotion	Security Strategy
Defense Policy Board	Security Strategy
International Watch	Security Strategy
National Security Agency Advisory Board	Security Strategy
Transformation Advisory Group	Security Strategy
Advisory Committee on Commercial Remote Sensing	Technology & Procurement
Commercial Space Transportation Advisory Committee	Technology & Procurement
Defense Acquisition Performance Assessment Project	Technology & Procurement
National Industrial Security Program Policy Advisory Committee	Technology & Procurement
President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee	Technology & Procurement
<i>Excluded</i>	
Advisory Committee on Commercial Operations of the United States Customs Service	Business & Trade
Advisory Committee on International Economic Policy	Business & Trade
Advisory Committee to the U.S. National Section of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission	Business & Trade
Defense Policy Advisory Committee on Trade	Business & Trade
Federal Advisory Committee on Insurance	Business & Trade
Global Markets Advisory Committee	Business & Trade
Industry Trade Advisory Committee on Intellectual Property Rights	Business & Trade

<i>Committee Name</i>	<i>Issue Area</i>
National Advisory Committee for Labor Provisions of United States Free Trade Agreements	Business & Trade
North Florida District Advisory Council	Business & Trade
Overseas Security Advisory Council	Business & Trade
President's Committee on the International Labor Organization	Business & Trade
President's Export Council Subcommittee on Export Administration	Business & Trade
U.S. Customs and Border Protection Airport and Seaport Inspections User Fee Advisory Committee	Business & Trade
Board of Advisors to the President, Naval Postgraduate School	Education & Training
Board of Advisors to the President, Naval War College	Education & Training
Board of Visitors for the National Defense Intelligence College	Education & Training
Board of Visitors of the U.S. Air Force Academy	Education & Training
Board of Visitors, National Defense University	Education & Training
Board of Visitors, U.S. Military Academy	Education & Training
National Security Education Board	Education & Training
Overseas Schools Advisory Council	Education & Training
United States Naval Academy Board of Visitors	Education & Training
Homeland Security Advisory Council	Homeland
National Infrastructure Advisory Council	Homeland
Advisory Committee on OIF-OEF Veterans and Families	Human Resources
Advisory Committee on the Readjustment of Veterans	Human Resources
Advisory Committee on Veterans Business Affairs	Human Resources
Defense Department Advisory Committee on Women in the Services	Human Resources
President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors	Human Resources

E. Alternate Specifications for Member-Level Analysis

E1 TABLE 6
Member-Level Panel Logit (without second interaction)

	<i>Average</i>	<i>Senate</i>	<i>House</i>
PowerPol	2.60** (0.94)	3.02** (0.94)	2.33* (0.95)
PresPower	2.29* (1.10)	2.80* (1.23)	1.28 (0.87)
PowerPol × PresPower	-6.35*** (1.27)	-7.86*** (1.33)	-3.96*** (1.07)
Approval Margin (90-day)	-0.26 (0.25)	-0.23 (0.24)	-0.26 (0.26)
# Interest Categories	0.03 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)
Established During War	0.81 (0.97)	0.85 (0.96)	0.77 (0.98)
Established by Legislation	-2.08 (1.21)	-2.04 (1.19)	-2.12 (1.23)
# Meeting Days	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Cost (ln \$)	0.08 (0.09)	-0.10 (0.10)	0.21* (0.09)
NYTimes Coverage	-0.15 (0.53)	-0.18 (0.53)	-0.10 (0.53)
New President	-0.46** (0.17)	-0.38* (0.17)	-0.49** (0.17)
Election Year	-0.13 (0.13)	-0.11 (0.13)	-0.11 (0.13)
Presidential Election Year	-0.10 (0.16)	-0.06 (0.15)	-0.13 (0.16)
Republican President	0.82*** (0.11)	0.81*** (0.12)	0.82*** (0.11)
Global War on Terror	-0.46** (0.17)	-0.34 (0.21)	-0.52*** (0.15)
Intercept	-4.63** (1.44)	-2.75 (1.49)	-5.84*** (1.45)
Insig2u			
cons	0.84 (0.44)	0.82 (0.45)	0.88* (0.44)

E2 TABLE 7
Member-Level Panel Logit (segmented sample, PowerPol = 1)

	<i>Average</i>	<i>Senate</i>	<i>House</i>
PowerPol	-4.37** (1.44)	-5.23** (1.69)	-3.24** (1.15)
Approval Margin (90-day)	0.12 (0.47)	0.01 (0.46)	0.14 (0.47)
# Interest Categories	-0.02 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.05)
Established During War	-0.05 (1.75)	-0.04 (1.95)	-0.05 (1.61)
Established by Legislation	-3.80 (2.45)	-3.58 (2.71)	-3.91 (2.26)
# Meeting Days	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Cost (ln \$)	-0.47** (0.16)	-0.61*** (0.18)	-0.38* (0.16)
New President	-0.69* (0.28)	-0.66* (0.28)	-0.69* (0.29)
Election Year	0.17 (0.22)	0.18 (0.22)	0.15 (0.22)
Presidential Election Year	-0.42 (0.26)	-0.34 (0.25)	-0.42 (0.26)
Republican President	1.63*** (0.21)	1.52*** (0.21)	1.68*** (0.22)
Global War on Terror	-1.07*** (0.30)	-0.79* (0.35)	-1.31*** (0.26)
Intercept	6.53* (2.88)	8.06* (3.14)	5.54* (2.75)
lnsig2u			
cons	0.47 (0.74)	0.70 (0.73)	0.28 (0.75)

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