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Powlick, Philip John, Ph.D.

University of Pittsburgh, 1990

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THE AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS AND THE PUBLIC

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

1990

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UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

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ABSTRACT

THE AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS AND THE PUBLIC

Philip J. Powlick, Ph.D.

University of Pittsburgh, 1990

The general question of this study is, How do foreign policy officials perceive the role of the public in theAmerican foreign policy process. Specifically, 1) What attitudes do foreign policy officials hold regarding public opinion?, 2) How do officials perceive and assess public opinion?, 3) Do institutions aid in this assessment?, 4) How responsive are officials to public opinion?, and 5) How has the approach of officials to public opinion changed in recent decades. Research consisted of in-depth, confidential interviews of officials at the State Department and the National Security Council staff, conducted during 1988 and 1989. The core sample size was 68 officials, though a further 20 interviews added background information. A written questionnaire was also administered to each respondent.

Officials considered the public to be largely unsophisticated on foreign policy matters, due to perceived public inattentiveness. However, officials displayed a "cultural norm" emphasizing the need for public input into foreign policy decisions, in order to ensure public support for policy initiatives. Policies which lack such support were seen as both infeasible and fundamentally flawed.

Officials were seen to assess public opinion through ad hoc procedures, using combinations of operationalized public opinion, categorized (in descending order of frequency) as Elected Officials, News Media, Unmediated

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Opinion, Interest Groups, and Elites. Institutional mechanisms for assessing public opinion were seen as largely ineffective.

Officials were also seen to favor the inclusion of public opinion as a major factor in foreign policy decisions. Because of difficulties in assessing opinion, they must often anticipate or guess likely public reactions. After making a decision, rather than changing policies in response to public opposition, most officials favor attempting to change public opinion (in order to build support) by means of "public education."

In several areas, officials were seen to display different approaches to public opinion than had previously been thought (based upon studies before the 1980s). Officials were more likely to factor public opinion into decisions, due primarily to increasing assertiveness in Congress, aggressive news media, and the "lessons" of Vietnam. They were also more likely to look toward unmediated sources of opinion, and less likely to equate elite preferences with public opinion.

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It is always difficult to know where to begin when acknowledging those who have helped one along the way during a major project such as a dissertation. It is also difficult to avoid the use of certain clichés; "I want to thank all the little people..." But along these lines, I would like first to acknowledge the absolutely indispensable help I received from the subjects of this study - the men and women of the U.S. Department of State and National Security Council Staff - without whose cooperation this study would certainly have been quite impossible. I wish I could thank them all individually, but the ground rules of our meetings precluded any form of direct attribution. Those who took part in this project between 1987 and 1989 will know who they are when they read these words: A sincere thanks to you all. You taught me alot about yourselves, the process of foreign policy making, and especially about the way the world looks from inside "the Building." I especially would like to thank those individuals who took the extra time to participate in the follow-up issue coding process in early 1989.

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Section I

Purpose and Method

The initial chapters of this dissertation will lay out the structure, foci, and organization of the analysis to follow. Chapter One introduces the major questions to be addressed regarding the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy making within the United States government. It will also briefly review the previous literature in this area, highlighting the need for updated, individual-level research on the manner in which policy officials respond to the public.

Chapter Two presents the methodology used to conduct the research upon which this dissertation is based. It will review the derivation of the sample population, as well as interview and questionnaire methods employed. Thus, these opening chapters will supply the reader with an understanding both of the nature and scope of inquiry, as well as the means employed, before the presentation of data and results in Section II.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The relationship between a nation's policies and its domestic public opinion has always been an area of both normative and empirical debate. Even among the most reputable political scientists, one can find a wide divergence of thought on the role of public opinion in American foreign policy. The following quotes, for example, are but two definitively stated, yet highly divergent, examples.

> The finding of substantial congruence between [public] opinion and policy (especially when opinion changes are large and sustained, and issues are salient), together with the evidence that opinion tends to move before policy more than vice versa, indicates that opinion changes are important causes of policy change.... In foreign affairs there is comparable evidence for government responsiveness (Benjamin Page & Robert Shapiro, 1983).

> Public attitudes and beliefs play a relatively minor and essentially indirect role in determining the behavior of nations and their consequent interaction.... At the very most, public opinion is a limiting, conservative factor and has seldom been a force for diplomatic innovation (J.D. Singer, 1963).

One possible source of divergence is that, in the long term, policy does seem to conform to opinion (e.g. Page & Shapiro, 1983:, Kusnitz, 1984), yet few researchers have been able to find evidence of direct or near-term influence by public opinion on foreign policy (e.g. Cohen, 1973; Levering, 1978). As Bernard Cohen has asked, "How... can we reconcile the lack of governmental

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responsiveness in the short run with an apparent responsiveness in the long run?" (Cohen, 1973:206)

This dissertation represents an effort to reconcile this seeming paradox by examining the manner in which American public opinion impacts upon individual foreign policy officials in the course of their work of formulating and implementing policy. By looking at the role of public opinion in this way, this study will attempt to shed greater light upon the question of whether, and in what ways, public opinion affects American foreign policy.

Within this larger context of the public/foreign policy linkage, this study will also address a number of more specific issues: What are the general attitudes of middle and upper level foreign policy decision makers and bureaucrats toward the role of public opinion? How do the institutions and processes of foreign policy facilitate (or hinder) the transmission, interpretation, and utilization of public opinion information by officials in the policy process? How, and to what degree, do foreign policy decision makers and bureaucrats assess public opinion in formulating and implementing policy? How do foreign policy officials react to public opinion; are they responsive? Have recent changes in the foreign policy environment affected the way in which public opinion is considered in the foreign policy process? As will be seen, the answers to these questions provide the foundation for an optimistic assessment of the potential for accord between public attitudes and American foreign policy, yet the realities of actual practice make the attainment of greater harmony a difficult undertaking.

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Major Questions / Issues

Attitudes toward public opinion. The assumption is often made that certain attitudes among decision makers have an effect upon the policy decisions they make. This assumption is, of course, a common one in the political behavior literature, whether in examining mass public opinion (e.g. Sniderman and Brody, 1977; Kinder and Sears, 1981) or in studies of decision making in international affairs (e.g. Jervis, 1976; Larson, 1985; Herrmann, 1986). In one such study, Alexander George presents a useful set of assumptions concerning the importance of beliefs and attitudes in explaining the behavior of actors in the foreign policy process. These assumptions include the notion that "individuals orient themselves to their surroundings by acquiring, storing, appraising, and utilizing information about the physical and social environment" which results in the construction of sets of beliefs which "simplify and structure the external world," which then tend to be "relatively stable." From such sets of beliefs, "much of an individual's behavior is shaped by the particular ways in which he perceives, evaluates and interprets incoming information," subject to the selective bias imposed by pre-established belief sets (George, 1980:57).[1]

There are few works, however, which attempt to link individuals' attitudes with either concrete policy outcomes or with their actions in the foreign policy process (though exceptions include Holsti & Rosenau, 1984; Larson, 1985; Powlick, 1988). To date the only major work which studies the mechanisms of the public opinion/foreign policy linkage at the individual level and which systematically examines the attitudes of individuals in the foreign policy process is Bernard Cohen's The Public's Impact on Foreign

[1] I also consider such sets of beliefs to be analogous with cognitive schemata (Larson, 1985:50-57).

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Policy (1973). Cohen examined the attitudes toward the public of a number State Department officials and concluded that the State Department's attitude toward the public could be summed up in one quotation - "To hell with public opinion... We should lead and not follow" (Cohen, 1973:62).

As will be discussed below, however, there are compelling reasons for exercising caution in the application of Cohen's findings to the present context. Accordingly, this dissertation updates and expands our knowledge about the attitudes of foreign policy officials toward the public-at-large, as well as their attitudes toward the appropriate role which the public should play in the formulation of foreign policy. If there is, in fact, a relationship between individuals' attitudes and political actions and outcomes, we must know what the attitudes are which form the bases of such behavior. As will be seen in Chapter Three, these attitudes are at once critical of the public itself, while at the same time indicating the bureaucracies' willingness to accord a significant policy input role to public opinion.

In addition to examining the attitudes of officials with regard to mass public opinion (in Chapter Three), Chapter Six will also examine officials' attitudes toward other domestic political institutions - Congress, the news media, and interest groups - which often serve to express or represent public opinion. While it is often difficult to separate these institutions from public opinion itself, the findings of Chapter Seven will imply differentially effective avenues of influence for different types of "public" opinion.

The effect of institutions and processes. In any large bureaucracy it is obviously both necessary and desirable for there to exist a division of labor. To this end, and with regard to the subject of this research, we will wish to examine the effect which public affairs institutions and processes have upon

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the assessment and utilization of public opinion on foreign policy matters. Further, the degree to which these institutional mechanisms are utilized by those for whom they are intended, the officials who must make or advise on policy decisions, will also be assessed.

As with other aspects of my research, this particular question invites comparison with what Bernard Cohen (1973) found in the 1960s. Cohen found an institutional structure in the State Department for the analysis and dissemination of public opinion information that had fallen into such disuse and disrepute that he concluded that, "There are no formal mechanisms of opinion analysis within the State Department any longer; it is every man for himself..." (Cohen, 1973:72). There are several bases upon which to launch a reassessment of Cohen's findings, however. Institutional changes in the State Department, the geometric rate of growth in public opinion polling since the mid-1970s, and recent increases in media attention in foreign affairs all point toward the possibility of change in the public affairs institutions of the foreign policy bureaucracy.

Finally, this work will also examine an institution which Cohen did not study at all - the National Security Council. Are there mechanisms comparable to those in the State Department by which the NSC staff can analyze and disseminate public opinion information? As will be seen in Chapter Four, these institutions and processes, both in State and the NSC, leave a great deal to be desired.

Bureaucratic assessment of public opinion. There are two essential matters to be addressed in a discussion of how foreign policy bureaucrats assess public opinion. First, do they care to be informed about public attitudes? That is, is

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public opinion a factor deemed worthy of their time and energy? And second, if public opinion is deemed worthy of examination, how is it seen?

One way to approach the first of these questions is to examine whether attitudes as to the degree of influence public opinion should have in the policy process, as well as personal emotions and biases regarding the American mass public, affect how foreign policy officials subsequently assess public opinion. Presumably, officials who express more positive attitudes about the public's understanding of foreign policy issues will be more inclined to take such opinions into account when considering policy options. Similarly, those who express the attitude that public input into policy is both legitimate and desirable should also be more likely to factor the public's views into their decisions.

Positive attitudes toward the role of public opinion are not, of course, the only factors which lead a decision maker to seek information on public opinion. A decision maker may simply want to ensure, for pragmatic political purposes, that a policy is as widely popular as possible. To the extent that this is so, a policy maker will wish to know if he or she can expect public support for such a policy.

Of course, the very definition of the concept of "public opinion" comes into play in the assessment of opinion as well. Amidst the cacophony of voices which purport to speak for or represent the public, the foreign policy official must determine, in operational terms, what public opinion is. Is it poll data, the Congress, election results, activists, the media, interest groups, friends and neighbors, or a mixture of some or all of these? The problems of operationalizing public opinion will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Other factors in the assessment of public opinion come into play at this point as well. The public visibility, or salience, of certain issues is a factor in

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the weighing of public opinion. Issue salience also affects the degree to which policy makers are able to perceive the existence of public opinion on an issue. Low salience issues generate little public attention, hence there are few expressions of public opinion on them. Differences in salience affect whether information on public opinion is sought at all, the way in which it may be sought, and the kinds of public voices which carry the greatest weight with policy makers.

Another related set of questions centers on intensity; how exercised public opinion is on a given policy should also be important. If an issue has a high profile but generates little intense feeling in the public at large, public opinion may be assessed differently. If, however, an issue is little known among the public-at-large, but generates intense feelings among a particular sub-group (such as ethnic groups), public opinion may become operationalized as the opinions of that particular group.

One important implicit question is, What role does public opinion play in cases where there are no apparent means of assessing opinion on an issue? That is, if a decision maker deems it important to consider public opinion in making a policy decision, how is public opinion assessed when there are no data on public attitudes in that policy area? Such instances may come about in at least two ways. One is in fast-breaking areas; military crises, natural disasters, or ongoing coups abroad, for example. Another kind of policy in which there is a lack of such information is in minor or obscure policy areas. Public opinion polls are rarely conducted on trivial issues or issues about which few people have an interest. Such cases may cause a decision maker to either discard any consideration of public attitudes or to guess about what public opinion might be. Such guessing leads the decision maker to try to assess the potential for public approval or rejection of policies to be

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undertaken, or to gauge constraints imposed by public opinion. The ways in which public opinion is assessed will be discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

Responsiveness to public opinion. Once foreign policy officials have information about and have assessed public opinion on an issue, what then? Do they act upon that information, attempting to bring policy in line with public opinion? Do they ignore it, essentially discounting its importance? Or do they act between these extremes, factoring public opinion into decisions as one of many considerations? If so, which factors are more important? Under what conditions is public opinion likely to be a more or less important decision factor?

In even the most optimistic general assessments of the way public opinion affects foreign policy decisions, the public has typically been looked at in terms of broad constraints defining the general range of options available to policy makers while allowing broad leeway within these boundaries (e.g. Key, 1961; Cohen, 1973), though in particular cases it has sometimes been seen to play a more active role in influencing policy (e.g. Small, 1988; Kusnitz, 1984). Aside from the fact that such a conception of "broad constraints" is both vague and, within an elected government, largely self-evident, such a description of the effect of public opinion upon foreign policy tells us little about how public opinion is initially factored into decisions (if at all), and the weight which attaches to public opinion as a factor relative to other domestic and international elements. Chapter Seven will examine the ways in which public opinion is conceived as a factor in decisions and the weight which is attached to it.

Chapter Seven will also examine the question of responsiveness to public opinion. Do officials attempt to be responsive to public attitudes both

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prior and subsequent to decisions on foreign policy issues? As will be seen, officials display more positive attitudes toward public opinion as a factor in the making of decisions than they do about responding to public feedback subsequent to policy decisions. These differences may begin to explain the paradox between the apparent short term unresponsiveness of foreign policy officials and the long-term congruence between opinion and policy.

The changing political environment and public opinion. Much of the literature of the topic on public opinion/foreign policy linkage is based upon the foreign policy process prior to the end of the Vietnam War. The major work to-date on the topic, Bernard Cohen's The Public's Impact of Foreign Policy (1973), was based upon interviews conducted in 1965 and 1966. Thus, much of the current conventional wisdom on the opinion/policy nexus derives from the pre-Vietnam foreign policy making environment. Cohen's findings included a description of a foreign policy bureaucracy which was resistant to influences from the external political environment (including public opinion), which analyzed public opinion in a haphazard manner, and which was generally unresponsive to the American public. (Cohen's findings are described more fully later in this Introduction, as well as in Chapters Eight and Nine.)

Many elements of the foreign policy official's political environment have changed since Cohen's earlier work. The Congress, for instance, has become much more active in determining and overseeing foreign policy (Whalen, 1982; Crabb and Holt, 1989). Prevalent attitudes concerning the aims of American foreign policy have also changed since Vietnam, as anti-communism and interventionism have waned (Reilly, 1987). Even the attitudes of foreign policy elites themselves have been seen to have changed in the

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wake of Vietnam, resulting in the breakdown of "bipartisan consensus" (Holsti and Rosenau, 1984). This has resulted in presidents' placing ever greater emphasis upon the short-term political implications of foreign policy decisions (Destler, Lake, and Gelb, 1984; Kernell, 1986). Even the demographic make-up of the foreign policy bureaucracy itself has been subject to change, as deliberate efforts have been made in recent years to widen the base of Foreign Service Officer recruitment (Rubin, 1985).

With all of these changes in the political environment, one might easily expect to see differences between the foreign policy bureaucracy which Cohen (1973) saw and the behavior of foreign policy officials today. As will be shown in Chapters Eight and Nine, there has been a great deal of attitude change among foreign policy officials, though with little easily-apparent impact upon policy outcomes.

Further questions. The analyses of all the questions above will admittedly be more descriptive than theoretical. There currently exists, however, a gap in the descriptive literature on foreign policy processes which precludes the construction of better theories of the public opinion/foreign policy linkage. This dissertation and/or the work which follows from it may help to shed light upon further questions:

1. How important (generally) are considerations of public opinion in foreign policy decision making, and how much does public opinion affect foreign policy outcomes?
2. Is the foreign policy process essentially responsive to public opinion, does it seek to manipulate opinion, or might public opinion simply be irrelevant?
3. How might government and public opinion more easily reach accord on foreign policy issues in the future?

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Normative Theories of Linkage

Any time that one examines the relationship between public opinion and government it is inevitable, though often implicitly so, that the relationship comes to be compared with both the analyst's and the reader's perception of what that relationship should look like. Before we proceed to examine the relationship itself, this section will examine some theories as to the appropriate relationship between public opinion and public policy, both in general terms and with relation to foreign policy.

General linkage theory. While the history of writing about public opinion is a long one, few works have attempted to set out both empirical and normative theories about the relationship between public opinion and government within the same work. Perhaps this is because to do so requires the intellect (or the ego) of no less a pair of figures than Walter Lippmann and V.O. Key.

Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922) saw the public as largely uninformed and uninterested in the events and politics of the world outside of their immediate experience. Most people simply did not have the time or energy to acquire a great deal of accurate political information. Thus, according to Lippmann, the public could not be expected to either formulate or articulate appropriate public policies, at least at the national level. Because of this, Lippmann both saw and advocated a major role for expert advisers within the government. Such advisers were to be divorced from the electoral political considerations of those they served and were to provide only the best objective advice to elected decision makers. Elected officials themselves were to give such advice great weight in their decisions, but were also to act responsibly with regard to their constituents' interests. After making a decision, the leader's role was to then explain and justify policy to the public in terms they

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could understand. The public's role was thus relegated to approval or disapproval of leaders at the time of elections.

V.O. Key, in two works - *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (1961) and *The Responsible Electorate* (1966) - began with a more favorable treatment of the American public itself than had Lippmann. While fully conceding areas of ignorance and seeming irrationality within public opinion, Key nevertheless reached the judgement that, in the aggregate, the public usually reached appropriate decisions on political questions. The effective functioning of democracy was, however, largely dependent upon the political elites which both followed and led the public-at-large. The system depended upon the willingness of elites to follow policies which were within the range of public acceptance - that is policies were first to be analyzed within the context of what the public would support. Because he saw no functional means by which to directly compel elites to take account of public opinion on most policy issues, Key concluded that it was the democratic political culture of elites themselves which kept this linkage function operating.

Key also considered it necessary for elites to provide the public with accurate and objective information about political issues, as well as to be able to use such information to support and defend policy decisions. Failures of democracy, or failures of policy due to their inability to rally public support, were, according to Key, not failures of the public itself, but rather failures of elites to maintain effective linkage between public opinion and public policy. "Democracies decay," he stated, "not because of the cupidity of the masses, but because of the stupidity and self-seeking of leadership echelons. Politicians often make of the public a scapegoat for their own shortcomings" (Key, 1961:557).

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Normative theories of linkage: Foreign policy issues. The topic of linkage between American public opinion and United States foreign policy is one which has been examined by a number of political scientists since Gabriel Almond's seminal The American People and Foreign Policy (1950). Almond split the American body-politic into two groups, attentive and non-attentive foreign policy publics. The attentive group, populated largely by political, educational, and economic elites, demonstrated a shared set of attitudes and beliefs on foreign policy issues. Linkage within this group was facilitated by a foreign policy consensus among its members. Linkage between the non-attentive public and the foreign policy process was weak, however, an assertion which Almond implicitly endorsed through his characterization of mass attitudes on foreign policy issues as "moods".[2] The public was found to be essentially uninterested in foreign affairs, and thus did not seek out information about such issues. (This picture of a public essentially ignorant of foreign policy was further reinforced by the findings of Campbell et al (1960).) Public opinion was thus characterized by emotional attitudes on foreign policy topics, with the public becoming complacent during periods of calm, and over-reacting during crises. Though he did not view the public-at-large quite as negatively as Almond, V.O. Key, too, largely endorsed the notion that the values and attitudes of elites was what truly kept democracy operating, and that linkage only operated to the degree that public opinion placed constraints upon government officials in the form of "opinion dikes" (Key, 1961). Thus, minimal linkage between public opinion and foreign policy was not only assumed by many of the foremost political scientists of the 1950s and 1960s, but it was also considered to be a desirable state of affairs.

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[2] See also Klingberg, 1952.

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Since the early nineteen seventies, Almond's contentions about the structure of public opinion on foreign policy and its influence upon the foreign policy process itself have come under greater scrutiny. The "mood" theory was criticized, for instance, by William Caspary (1970), who interpreted Almond's evidence showing variations in public attentiveness on foreign policy problems to be not a sign of "moods swings," but rather as rational reactions to crises. Caspary also set forth a limited amount of data showing long-term stability of public opinion on certain broad foreign policy principles. More recently, Shapiro and Page (1988), using data compiled from over fifty years of public opinion polling, have contended that public opinion on foreign policy over the long term "has tended to be rather stable" and that when it did change, it did so in rational ways.

In similar work, Ole Holsti (1988) has also asserted that American public opinion on foreign policy issues has tended to be both stable and rational. Holsti's work also adds a new dimension to this topic by discussing the normative and intellectual bases of previous characterizations of public opinion on foreign policy. He demonstrates a commonality of thought between Almond's view of an irrational public and the tenets of realism as expressed by Morgenthau (1985) and Kennan (1951). According to such realists, the public is ignorant of the issues and problems of foreign policy, and therefore its influence should be minimized; a good foreign policy is best formulated when policy makers are insulated from public opinion.[3]

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[3] For example, from Kennan: "I think we would be poor representatives of our country indeed if we were to sit back passively, knowing all we know, and say: 'Our views don't come into the question, and we just do what the people tell us to do.' ... The government has got to insist on what it believes is right and go ahead with it" (From Gellman, 1984:96-7). From Morgenthau: "One requirement of the statesman's art is to steer a middle course between respect for the perennial principles of sound foreign policy and the fickle preferences of public opinion" (Morgenthau, 1985:165-6).

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However, with recent evidence that the public is not as prone to mood swings or irrational opinions on foreign policy as was previously presumed, the normative bases of Almond, Morgenthau, and Kennan's thoughts on the desirability of minimizing the link between public opinion and foreign policy have also come into question. There now exists a much wider body of thought about the desirability of public input into foreign policy decisions (e.g. Weinberger, 1984; Shapiro and Page, 1988). Against this normative background, this dissertation attempts to shed light on the empirical realities of foreign policy linkage. If, as recent writers assert, the public is more "rational" than previously supposed, and if, therefore, the public should have significant input in foreign policy, do the conditions exist under which public opinion can have an impact upon policy?

Previous Empirical Studies of Foreign Policy and Public Opinion

Gabriel Almond's book (1950), as well as a number of works afterward, focussed a great deal of attention on the basic structure of attitudes and opinions in reaction to foreign policy events (e.g. Mueller, 1973; Maggioto & Wittkopf, 1981; Wittkopf, 1983; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1987). In studying the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy, public opinion has most often been considered the dependent variable. More rare have been works which reverse the causal arrows; which treat foreign policy as the dependent variable. With the establishment of a more widespread belief in the normative desirability of a link between public opinion and foreign policy, there is a greater need for examination of such linkage.

The answer to the question of whether public opinion affects American foreign policy is, at first glance a simple one; depending upon the issue

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involved, yes, it does. The question of the degree of that influence is, however, a completely unresolved one in the current literature on both public opinion and foreign policy. Some writers contend that public opinion, aside from setting some very broad constraints, has only the most minor influence upon the formulation of foreign policy (e.g. Key, 1961; Cohen, 1973; Levering, 1978; Schneider, 1984). Others contend that, while public opinion may not always directly alter policy, it does exercise a substantial influence in limiting policy alternatives, in setting political boundaries, or in causing the abandonment of unpopular policies (e.g. Page & Shapiro, 1983; May, 1984; Ostrom and Job, 1986; Hinckley, 1988).

To date there have been very few systematic attempts to resolve the question of public opinion/foreign policy linkage. Some statements about the importance (or non-importance) of public opinion have been very case-specific. George Moffett (1985), for instance, carried out a detailed case study of the ratification of the Panama Canal treaties in the late 1970s. Moffett found that policy makers and legislators both tended to be responsive to what they perceived public opinion to be, but that they drastically misinterpreted public attitudes regarding the Canal treaties. Specifically, he found that public opinion was solidly against the treaties, but that the ratification campaign of the Carter administration not only convinced legislators and elites to support the treaties, but also convinced them that the public supported the treaties. In this case, Moffett found, public opinion had only a minor impact, even though most officials attempted to be responsive to it.

A study by Leonard Kusnitz (1984) found that public opinion had a significant impact upon American policy toward China from 1949 to 1979. Another case study by Sandra Davis (1987) regarding Vietnam policy in 1975 concludes that public opinion had virtually no impact, while Ernest May

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(1984) found that public opinion noticeably constrained American policy makers in the early years of the Cold War. My own case study (Powlick, 1988) found that public opinion exercised some influence over U.S. policy in Lebanon to the degree that it constrained policy, though it was not by itself a decisive factor. As these brief descriptions indicate, work at the case study level has not gone far toward resolving the linkage question.

One systematic approach by which to assess the linkage between public opinion (usually as measured in public opinion polls) and foreign policy has been to assess the degree of congruence between the two. Robert Weissberg (1976) did this for a number of individual foreign policy areas and found that policy usually displays some degree of congruence with opinion, though measurement and conceptual problems make such congruence difficult to gauge. Weissberg also found considerable variance in the degree of congruence, depending upon the issue involved. He made no attempt, however to generalize which kinds of issues are more or less likely to demonstrate congruence. A somewhat more sophisticated approach along these same lines has been to correlate mass public opinion poll results with changes and trends in foreign policy. Page & Shapiro (1983) and Monroe (1979), for instance, have found a general congruence between public attitudes and American foreign policies. Further, the former also found that when public opinion changes, official policy tends to follow.

Such results are, perhaps, a useful start in assessing the link between opinion and policy. Yet, they are clearly not enough. While there must, of course, be congruence for linkage to exist, congruence alone does not prove that linkage exists.[4] But while congruence between policy and public opinion

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[4] For example, on the well documented decisions of the Cuban Missile Crisis (Allison, 1971) public opinion was supportive of the decisions reached, though

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suggests that there may indeed be responsiveness among American policy makers, the caveat that basic methodology enjoins upon us - that correlation does not equal causation - requires that the linkage question be addressed in a different manner. One such approach is to study the responsiveness of individual policy makers to public opinion and public pressures.

The most important work to date in examining how public opinion itself affects foreign policy, and particularly foreign policy makers, however, remains Cohen's (1973) The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy. Cohen examined the attitudes of State Department officials toward the public and toward public opinion, as well as the linkages between the public and the Department. He also examined the manner by which such officials gathered and utilized information about public opinion. Cohen's findings were less than encouraging for those who wished to see a foreign policy apparatus responsive to public opinion. He found largely negative attitudes toward the public itself, little receptivity to the idea of public input into policy, and ad hoc and highly individual processes for gathering and processing public opinion information. The only linkage which Cohen saw in operation existed in the form of constraints, much along the lines of V.O. Key's (1961) "opinion dikes."

Because Cohen looked at the foreign policy linkage issue in broad terms, and also because his book was based on a large set of actual interviews with State Department officials, it has long been considered the major work in this area. In recent years, very few efforts have been made either to explicitly test or improve upon Cohen's findings. (As noted above, some case studies have emerged, but they have not come close to supplanting Cohen's work.) Some general discussions of the role of public opinion polls in the national security

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I know of no evidence that American public opinion was ever a major factor in the decision making surrounding the Crisis.

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decision process have been put forward by Ronald Hinckley (Hinckley, 1988; Beal and Hinckley, 1984). Hinckley contends that information from public opinion polls was widely used and was often crucial in specific foreign policy decisions during the Reagan administration. These contentions, however, have been based upon the author's personal, and largely anecdotal, experiences as a National Security Council staff member in the mid-1980s, rather than upon comprehensive and systematic research.

The gap to be filled. There thus remains a significant gap in the foreign policy literature regarding the role of public opinion in the policy process. The issue of linkage between public opinion and foreign policy remains an unresolved issue, about which there has been little definitive work in over twenty years. We know that there is some degree of linkage, but we know neither its extent nor the manner in which it operates. This dissertation, by examining the attitudes of foreign policy officials themselves, as well as the processes of foreign policy making related to public opinion, will serve as a start to the closing of the gap in the literature on the role of public opinion in American foreign policy. It will also move toward updating and replicating Cohen's previous work, attempting both to maintain the descriptive richness of the topic, while incorporating empirical methods of analysis.

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Chapter 2. Methodology

Prior to a discussion of the substantive findings of my research, this chapter provides a brief description of the methods and procedures used to gather data and construct measures. While the descriptions which follow summarize the general outlines of such methods and measures, they do not, for the most part, contain detailed accounts. Those wishing to know further details not included in the chapter should refer to the Appendices, which include question wording, the derivation of certain issue-based variables, the coding categories of responses, and the frequencies of all coded responses.

The Sample

The data and findings presented in this dissertation are derived principally from personal interviews (conducted in Washington, D.C.) of present and former foreign policy and national security officials. (A limited number of telephone interviews were also conducted). All interviews were conducted from December 1987 to January 1989, inclusive.

Interviews and research activities were largely divided into two segments. The first, and most important, comprised interviews of current foreign policy officials and were based upon a set of general interview questions designed to examine the topics and questions described in Chapter 1.[1] These interviews concerned the central international and domestic political factors which respondents reported using in making decisions and/or recommendations, how important public opinion is in such decisions, by what means they keep abreast of public opinion and domestic politics, and how

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[1] Questions from the general interview are presented as Appendix 1.

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much influence each respondent feels public opinion should have in policy decisions, to name but a few of the many issues addressed. The interview format also allowed for follow-up questions and explanations of responses.

In addition, a separate series of interviews was carried out to research a case study relating public opinion to U.S. foreign policy in Lebanon during the early 1980s (Powlick, 1988). For the most part, these differing sets of interviews were kept distinct; those interviewed using the general interview set were not also interviewed regarding the Lebanon case. There were three interviews where time permitted an overlap of interviews, and both general and Lebanon questions were discussed (see Table 2-1 below). To the degree that information and insights from other interviews were relevant to the more general topic of this dissertation, they have accordingly been integrated where appropriate.

In total, 87 interviews were conducted with, 84 in person and 3 by telephone (See Table 2-1). The majority of the analyses in this dissertation are based upon a large subset of this total for which the general interview set was used. These general interviews were carried out with 77 foreign policy officials, all in office at the time of the interview.[2] Of this group, nine have been excluded from the general data and findings of this work for one of two specific reasons. First, officials in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) have been excluded because of the role which such officials play as intelligence analysts, as opposed to policy makers or advisers. The mission of INR, as its members see it, is to present objective and accurate information summaries and analyses of conditions overseas. They neither look at American domestic political factors nor make policy

[2] With the exception of a few political appointees, the vast majority of these are still in office at this writing (Spring, 1990).

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recommendations. Thus, INR respondents have been omitted on the assumption that their attitudes about the public cannot be related to policy actions or outcomes. The second group excluded from the general analysis includes officials in State's Bureau of Public Affairs, for the simple reason that public opinion, however defined, is a crucial element in the Bureau's raison d'etre. Public opinion obtains heightened significance for such officials in a manner and for reasons unique to their Bureau's mission. These officials are therefore not comparable to more policy-oriented officials.

Interviews of the remaining 68 individuals make up the primary source of data for the discussion and findings of this dissertation. Of these sixty eight interview subjects, sixty two held State Department positions in Washington at the time of their interview, while the remaining six subjects were National Security Council staff members in policy (as opposed to support) positions.[3] The bureau affiliations of all interview subjects are seen in Table 2-1.

Individuals interviewed for the general data set were not chosen strictly at random. State Department subjects were selected based upon criteria designed to ensure representation for nearly all of the policy making bureaus of the State Department, a wide diversity of functional and policy responsibilities, and the full range of ranks from desk officer to assistant secretaries. The reader may note that there is a disproportionate number of cases from the five geographic bureaus of the State Department. This reflects

[3] The relatively small number of National Security Council staff members included is due largely to the nature of the staff itself. At the time interviews were being carried out, the staff had between sixty and seventy professionals listed in its telephone directory, of which about half were support, rather than policy advising/coordinating, positions. Of the thirty subjects from which to choose, about half were contacted, and half of these indicated that their positions were too sensitive to allow for interviews.

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Table 2-1: Distribution of Interviews

AGENCY/BUREAU	# completed w. q'aire	# completed w/out q'aire	
General Interviews, Present Officials, Interview in person			
State ARA (Latin America)	9		
State AF (Sub-Sahara Africa)	6		
State E (Undersecretariat/Economics)	1		
State EAP (East Asia & Pacific)	8		
State EB (Economics & Business)	3		
State EUR (Europe & Canada)	8		
State H (Legislative Affairs)	2		
State HA (Human Rights)	3		
State INM (Narcotics Matters)	1		
State IO (International Organizations)	1	1	
State NEA (Near East & South Asia)	8	1	
State OES (Oceans, Environment, Science)	2		
State PA (Public Affairs)	7	1	
State PM (Politico-Military Affairs.)	2	1	
State S (Secretariat)	3		
National Security Council	6		
Sub-Total	70	4	
Present Officials, Lebanon & General, Interview in person			
State INR (Intelligence/Research)	1		
State P (Undersecretariat/Political Affairs)	1		
State S (Secretariat)	1		
Present Officials, Lebanon Only, Interview in person			
State NEA (Near East & S. Asia)		1	
U.S. Marine Corps (civilian official)		1	
Present Officials, Background Only, Telephone Interview			
State INR		1	
National Security Council		1	
Former Officials, Lebanon, Interview in Person			
National Security Council	1		
U.S. Marine Corps (senior officer)		1	
State S (Secretariat)	2		
Former Officials, Lebanon, Telephone Interview			
U.S. Marine Corps (general officer)		1	
Former Officials, Background, Interview in Person			
National Security Council	1		
TOTALS	77	10	87

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both the relative sizes of bureaus, as well as their centrality to the making of policy. While issue oriented bureaus certainly play a role within their areas, the geographic bureaus remain the center of policy making power in the State Department (Rubin, 1985:134).

I make no claim that individuals were selected either scientifically or randomly. Nevertheless, I believe that the diversity of the sample population in terms of rank, policy area, and other variables, as well as the size of the sample group, make it a relatively representative subset of the State Department policy making and advisory bureaucracy as a whole. As can be seen in the demographic and attitudinal data (See Appendix 4) the sample group was rather diverse. Moreover, as I conducted more interviews, I came to find that certain types of response were repeated by large numbers and categories of respondent. That is, many of the impressions I gained from a few early interviews were reinforced in many successive interviews over time. Thus, I believe that the group of officials I contacted was not only representative of the Department as a whole, but also displayed certain important behavioral and attitudinal characteristics in sufficient frequency to be statistically and methodologically valid.

The six NSC respondents in the general sample were chosen primarily based upon their policy issue areas. That is, each of the NSC respondents resided in a different geographic or issue oriented office of the NSC staff structure. This was done to ensure that a diversity of issue and office perspectives would be represented. However, contrary to the State Department, I make no claims regarding the representativeness of this NSC sample to the NSC staff as a whole. NSC staff personnel have changed frequently in the past two decades, often fluctuating between varying mixes of professional bureaucrats, military officers, Foreign Service Officers, and

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civilian academics and experts. Moreover, six cases does not constitute a representative sample. However, when the NSC sample is combined with the State Department sample, a fairly representative subset of the foreign policy making bureaucracy can be seen, and in the discussions which follow, I will refer, for the most part, to findings concerning foreign policy officials generally, rather than solely State or NSC officials.

Interviews[4]

General interview subjects were initially contacted via a standardized letter which briefly described the study topic and interview format.[5] Two weeks or so after this initial mailing, if potential respondents had not contacted the author, follow-up calls were made to ascertain interest and (if possible) to arrange for interview sessions. A total of eighty State Department officials were contacted for inclusion in the data set upon which this paper is based, of which sixty eight agreed to be interviewed.[6] Of current NSC officials, 14 were contacted, of which eight agreed to be interviewed.[7] All interviews were conducted by the author.

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[4] The description of interview methods which follows applies solely to interviews for the general data set.

[5] For many officials, this actually meant receiving letters addressed to their predecessors in that position. However, the nature of the mailings allowed for the actual recipient of each letter to be the interview subject if the person to whom the letter was initially addressed had left government or had been assigned abroad.

[6] By rank, acceptances were 21 of 28 desk level officials, 23 of 25 officer director level, 16 of 18 at the deputy assistant-level (or equivalent), and 2 of 11 at the under/assistant secretary level. The low acceptance rate of the latter group was due to the heavy work-load and frequent requests for interviews which such officials face.

[7] Two of these eight held administrative support, rather than policy positions, and are thus not included in the general data set for this work.

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Interviews averaged about one hour, though they ranged from between 30 to 150 minutes. All but one of were conducted in the respondent's office. All interviews were conducted under rules of confidentiality and non-attribution. All officials contacted for this study were asked if they were willing to have the interview tape recorded. The choice of whether or not to tape was left to them; if they preferred not to be taped, no pressure was applied to change their minds. In such cases, interviews were recorded both by contemporaneous note-taking and by further reconstruction of responses immediately after each session. Nearly two-thirds (forty four) of those included in the general data set agreed to their interviews being taped. Such interviews provided a great wealth of quotable (though of course not attributable) accounts, as will be apparent in the chapters which follow.

I have reasonable faith that tape recording these subjects did not contaminate our interviews. As noted above, the choice of whether or not to tape was left with the subject. Several of the taped interviews were strikingly candid. In some cases, if the conversation became uncomfortable for the interviewee during answers to sensitive questions, the recorder was switched off. For the vast majority of interview questions, I have found no significant differences between the responses of those who were taped and those who chose not to be taped.[8]

Interviews were conducted through the use of a standard set of questions asked of all of the respondents (included here as Appendix 1). All questions were open ended, and follow-up and clarifying queries were asked where necessary. In order to maintain as comfortable and friendly a dialogue

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[8] In all probability, the few differences found are related to personality features which resulted both in different responses and a distrust of tape recorders.

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as possible, considerable variance occurred in the order and manner in which questions were asked. When a respondent anticipated or volunteered a response relevant to a question which had yet to be asked, that question was not asked later, so as to avoid unnecessary repetition. The order of questions often varied if the respondent embarked upon a logical course of argument contrary to that set down in the list of questions; if the person being interviewed laid out his or her own line of answers, I followed their lead. Several questions were asked using examples from the respondent's recent policy experiences, both to make abstract questions more accessible and to provide examples of cases where certain kinds of actions were taken. In short, the form of each interview was subject to considerable variance. The decision to conduct interviews in this way was taken consciously and deliberately in order to maintain the interest of the respondent, minimize the formality of the situation, and thereby enhance the quality of information gained. The more relaxed a respondent became with me and my questions, the more candid the answers often became, and the more free-flowing the information. While such interview methods undoubtedly can result in increased errors in the coding and analysis of data, and perhaps even bias, they undoubtedly also result in a greater volume and richness of information.

Coding of interview responses was done in two stages. The initial step was to review all tape recorded interviews. Interviews were not fully transcribed, however. Rather, for the purposes of coding, brief summaries or sets of notes were made for each response. (Transcriptions of potentially useable passages were made for inclusion as descriptive and illustrative examples to appear in the text of this study, but were generally not used for coding purposes.) For interviews which were not tape recorded, notes for coding were taken either during or immediately after each interview. Once all

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interviews had been pre-coded in this way, the condensed responses to individual interview items were then transcribed into a computer spreadsheet format and then directly compared. Through direct comparison of condensed responses, coding categories were derived for each item, and each individual response was then coded accordingly. (Codings and response frequencies appear herein as Appendix 4.) Each response was then entered in machine readable form onto a ASCI computer file for analysis using the SPSS-X™ statistical package.

Questionnaires

Additional data for this study were derived from a questionnaire which was given to all sixty eight participants included in the general data set, as well as to a number of those interviewed for background information and for research on the Lebanon case (See Table 2-1, above). Questionnaires were mailed to each respondent after arrangements had been made for the interview, with instructions to complete them prior to the interview, at which time they were to be collected by the author. A large majority of the questionnaires were collected in just this way. Occasional allowances had to be made for questionnaires which never arrived or were lost, and in cases where interviews could only be arranged on short notice.[9] Of the sixty eight persons interviewed in the general data set, all but three returned completed questionnaires.

Items on the questionnaire were close-ended. The major portion consisted of statements with which the respondent was asked to express

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9 Such subjects were given a fresh copy to be completed and mailed in an addressed and stamped envelope after the interview.

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degrees of agreement or disagreement. These items were designed to tap attitudes toward the nature of the public's understanding of foreign policy issues and the desirability of greater public input into foreign policy decisions, as well as a limited number of items on Congress' role in foreign policy, the role of the press, and a limited number of other, unrelated "distracter" questions. Each questionnaire also contained demographic items, as well as items requesting self-placement on standard seven-point party and ideology scales.

Attitude Measurement

One of the major variables discussed in this dissertation (Chapter 3 in particular) is the attitudes which foreign policy officials express regarding the sophistication of the public on foreign policy issues, and their attitudes toward the degree of responsiveness foreign policy makers should show (or the degree of input the public should have) in the foreign policy process. These attitudes are reported here in two forms. Primarily, such attitudes were assessed using the attitude questionnaire described above. Secondarily, additional insight into attitudes is gained through statements made during interviews regarding the value each respondent places upon public opinion in considering policy.

Contained within the written questionnaire provided to each respondent were fourteen items designed to measure attitudes toward the public on foreign policy issues. Half of these items were designed to tap attitudes regarding the intellectual qualities of public opinion in matters of foreign policy. The other half were designed to tap attitudes regarding the degree of input which the public should have in foreign policy decisions. All

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fourteen items were pre-tested for reliability and were found to load along the appropriate attitude dimension. After final collection of all questionnaires, the seven questions designated for each set of attitudes were examined for their inter-correlation and the strongest five items from each set of seven were selected for inclusion into indices, which I shall refer to as the Sophistication Index (Cronbach's alpha = .854), and the Input Index (alpha = .739). The questions and their frequencies are reported in Table 2-2 (following page).

The Sophistication Index is designed to tap respondent's attitudes toward the public's knowledge, cognitive abilities, and sophistication on issues of foreign policy. The Input Index is designed to tap normative attitudes concerning the degree of input and influence which the public should have in the foreign policy process.

Attitude index scores were constructed by giving values of 1 for strong agree responses (strongly negative attitudes toward the public), 2 for somewhat agree (somewhat negative attitudes), 3 for somewhat disagree, and 4 for strongly disagree responses.[10] The scores for the five items in each index were then averaged to yield scores ranging from 1 to 4 on each index. On the Sophistication Index, a score of one identifies attitudes which are most negative toward the public's foreign policy sophistication, whereas 4 is the most positive possible assessment of the public's abilities. On the Input Index, a score of 1 indicates the lowest possible willingness to allow public input and influence in the foreign policy process, whereas a score of 4 indicates very strong feelings about the need for public input into policy.

[10] The sole exception to this is question #22 which is worded positively, while all other questions in the index are worded negatively. Thus, for #22, strongly agree is most positive to the public, hence scores 4, and so on.

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Table 2-2: Attitude Index Items and Frequencies

Sophistication Index Items	Agree Strong	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strong
6. "The public simply does not have the sophistication necessary to make reasonable and rational decisions on foreign policy issues." (n=65)	1	21	31	12
10. "Most people in this country simply don't pay enough attention to current events for their opinions on foreign policy issues to be meaningful." (n=65)	12	27	22	4
13. "In foreign and security policies, there is a need for long-range planning which the public does not grasp." (n=64)	12	31	17	4
15. Most people in the U.S. have limited attention spans and public sentiments on foreign policy issues are usually short-lived." (n=64)	14	30	16	4
19. "For most people in the U.S., foreign policy issues are simply too far from their everyday experiences for them to understand such issues." (n=65)	9	19	33	4

Input Index Items	Agree Strong	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strong
3. "The United States would be better served if foreign policy officials were less restricted by public opinion and domestic issues." (n=65)	2	12	35	16
8. "In an elected government it is often necessary to be aware of public opinion for electoral reasons, but beyond such electoral considerations, public opinion should not affect foreign policy decisions."(n=64)	0	7	27	30
12. "In a democracy, it is often necessary for public officials to be aware of public opinion for political purposes. But beyond such political factors, public officials should not be greatly concerned with public opinion on questions of foreign policy." (n=64)	0	9	27	28
21. "There is a need for continuity and consistency in American defense and foreign policy that requires that the public's role in influencing such policies be minimized."(n=63)	1	12	31	19
22. "Although it might be difficult to administer in actual practice, more public input into foreign policy decisions would be good for the U.S." (n=65)	4	32	26	3

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The results presented in the body of this dissertation will incorporate data from a large number of interview and questionnaire items. By utilizing both open-ended personal interviews and close-ended questionnaires, this research incorporates both the methodology of survey techniques (in order to perform statistical analysis and to present concrete data to the reader) and the richness and depth of open-ended interviews. The results presented include descriptions of the basic attitudes, opinions, and to some extent, the behavior of the foreign policy officials interviewed, along with interview excerpts which highlight and explain them. Statistical analyses will also be used to describe the relationship between differing attitudes, as well as their relation to exogenous variables and their relationships to the activities and behavior of respondents. Because of the necessarily restrictive sample size, many of the statistical relationships which will emerge from the data will appear less than definitive. In such cases, where the results seen are nevertheless interesting or logically compelling, they can suggest further thought or research. In spite of the relatively small size of this sample, however, the results which follow will document a number of clear and statistically significant results.

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Section II

Data and Findings

The chapters which constitute Section II represent the foundations upon which the conclusions and implications of this dissertation will be built. Chapter Three presents the attitudes of foreign policy officials with regard both to the public's sophistication on foreign affairs and the degree of input which they feel the public should have into policy. Chapter Four examines the institutional mechanisms for the assessment of public opinion and communication with the public. Chapter Five examines the means and manner by which officials view (or operationalize) public opinion. Chapter Six will move on to an examination of officials' attitudes toward the domestic political institutions which often represent public opinion for individual foreign policy actors. Finally, Chapter Seven examines the ways in which officials factor public attitudes into their decisions, as well as the degree of responsiveness they demonstrate toward the public.

For the most part, these chapters are descriptive and analytical discourses. Though each contains some discussion of the implications which flow from their findings, most of the discussion of general conclusions and implications is reserved for the final three chapters which comprise Section III.

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Chapter 3. Attitudes of Foreign Policy Officials Toward Public Opinion

The first substantive topic to be addressed in this dissertation concerns the attitudes of those who make and advise upon questions of foreign policy. In particular, it examines their attitudes regarding the sophistication and knowledge of the public-at-large on foreign policy issues, as well as such officials' attitudes on how much input and influence the public should have in the process itself. If, as I have suggested in Chapter One, attitudes do matter - i.e., that they influence behavior - we must begin this study by examining the attitudes themselves. What are the basic outlines of these attitudes and what are their foundations? How do officials explain them? What factors are likely to affect these attitudes?

After addressing these descriptive matters, the chapter then moves on to a brief conceptual and speculative discussion. What do the attitudes and opinion of foreign policy officials tell us about the possibilities for effective linkage between public opinion and foreign policy? In later chapters the actual connections between attitudes and behavior in foreign policy linkage will be examined. For now, however, we proceed by examining foreign policy officials' attitudes toward the public.

Attitudes Toward the Sophistication of the Public

The frequency of ratings on the Sophistication Index (following page) tells a great deal of the story regarding foreign policy officials' attitudes toward the public.[1] With a range between 1.0 (denoting the lowest possible Sophistication

[1] This index is described and explained in Chapter 2.

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ratings) and 4.0 (the highest possible rating), there is an obvious skew toward the lower end of the scale.

Table 3-1: Sophistication Index Rating Frequencies

Rating	Frequency	Percent
1.0 to 1.6	10	16
1.7 to 2.2	17	27
2.3 to 2.8	22	35
2.9 to 3.4	10	16
3.5 to 4.0	4	6
	63	100

Mean = 2.39

It is clear that the officials questioned have a generally low opinion of the public's sophistication on foreign policy issues. A few individuals explain such low ratings as being based on the public's propensity toward emotional reactions or mood swings (Almond 1960). Some negative evaluations were explained (during interviews) as being based on a lack of intellect in foreign policy matters among large segments of the public. For example, one desk officer (Sophistication Index score = 1.8) cited a public opinion poll regarding the Persian Gulf:

> ... Approximately 55% successfully placed it in the Middle East. They asked the further question of, 'The President says we have national interests in the Persian Gulf which we need to defend and do you support his position?' 75% supported his position, firmly demonstrating that there that there are about 20% of the people out there in America who do not know where it is but are willing to fight to defend it. That to me is the epitome of ignorant opinion.

A deputy assistant secretary (Sophistication = 2.2) stated simply,

> I never fail to be amazed, in all the articles and books I read, about the stupidity of the average American... high school students who can't tell you where the U.S. is on a map... adults who read a newspaper once a month...

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Other negative evaluations, however, were explained by the respondents not in terms of the public's lack of intellectual ability, but rather as the result of a public which is not attentive enough to foreign policy issues to bring relevant information to bear in forming opinions. That is, rather than being incapable of sophistication on foreign policy issues, most Americans are seen as being overly parochial and uninterested in such topics. One senior foreign service officer (Sophistication Index = 2.4) recalled an episode from early in his career - the kind of story of which many officials have some variant.

> The first time I came back from overseas - that was back in the 50s and Lucy was the rave on television - I remember coming back and we had dinner at my mother-in-law's house, and my brother-in-law and a bunch of people were there, and before the dinner, the first five minutes was all, 'Oh __, you're back, how interesting. Tell us all about Italy', and I started to say something about it and then within three minutes someone would say, 'Oh yes, I remember that on the Lucy show she took a trip to Rome', and from then on the conversation was about Lucy, television, taxes, who moved in downstairs, the value of houses... It's a long way of telling you that the great majority of Americans really are more interested in domestic issues, so when you get public opinion polls on foreign policy issues, you really have to question how much thought has gone into that.

A deputy assistant secretary (Sophistication = 1.2) said,

> I have to say that I am absolutely appalled by what I find when I go around the country in terms of the level of information even on the part of groups that should be well-informed for their own self-interest.

Some officials, while citing the limited information the public has on foreign policy issues, think that there is simply too much for most people who

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are not experts to know; the public does not know a lot, but neither should it be expected to. A deputy assistant secretary (Sophistication Index = 1.0) stated that

> It's no secret; the U.S. public is not knowledgeable about most foreign policy issues... An example, say Noriega; Panama. U.S. public opinion is to go down and grab the little son-of-a-bitch. As an American citizen that's my reaction, but there are an awful lot of complex derivatives of such an action and the American public cannot possibly know about things having to do with the [Panama Canal] Treaty, the Canal, and our position in Latin America and at the O.A.S - there's a million other things - and there's no way the American public can know enough about these things to say, 'Yes, I still think we should go and get the bastard'....[2]

Somewhat more nuanced evaluations seem to derive from the opinion that the public generally does not display a high degree of issue constraint. That is, while the public may well be aware of what is going on, and may even display intellectually coherent attitudes on broad principles, when issues are more specific, public opinion becomes less consistent and rational. An official in the African Affairs Bureau (Sophistication = 2.2), for example, stated that,

> Public opinion on South Africa on most issues is often confused and contradictory. Its hard to know what one means by public opinion. People on the one hand favor sanctions, but on the other hand they don't favor the effects that sanctions are likely to produce.

One office director (Sophistication Index = 1.6), cited a conversation with a group of Americans he had met while on a scuba diving vacation.

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[2] This interview occurred in July 1988, well over one year before Manuel Noriega was, in fact, grabbed by U.S. forces.

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The conversation turned to Noriega, and the reaction was, 'Why the hell are you people f-cking around with that guy? Why haven't you gone and cleaned that little bastard's clock? We've got our military, that canal's important, he's been indicted, why haven't you striped pants cookie-pushers gone down there and kicked his butt?' We discussed and it, and I asked, 'Well, what about Nicaragua? You guys seem to be ready to send the Airborne into Panama, what about Nicaragua?' 'Not one bit of it. Not a dime to the Contras, or Honduras or Salvador or Guatemala. Let 'em all go to Hell. Let 'em all go communist, we don't care.' Its a real contradiction in the way people see these two issues... The basic instinct is sound; people understand - they intuit - when there is a problem and the best case response to it. But when it comes to very specific elements of that problem, people don't understand, particularly if it impinges on their pocket books. Does that mean you have an informed or uninformed public? I'd say uninformed. What are we doing about it? Not a hell of a lot. There's nothing much you can do.

While the data show a majority of officials interviewed as having somewhat low evaluations of the public's capabilities on foreign policy issues, the data also clearly show a wide range of attitudes, including several individuals with rather high appraisals of public sophistication. Some respondents see the public as having basically sound instincts on foreign policy matters which, carefully thought out or not, usually turn out to be correct. One NSC official (Sophistication = 3.6) put it this way:

The public is generally on the right track - in the right place - and that's why I don't mind the factor of public opinion. I guess if I disagreed on that particular policy, that would be a problem. But I think, all in all, public opinion is more often right than wrong.

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A few other officials specifically cited the public's lack of intense interest in foreign policy issues. Rather than being detrimental, such individuals saw this as both natural and refreshing. One such official rated the public rather low in specific questions (Sophistication = 2.2) but nevertheless volunteered a tolerant opinion about it.

> I'm from Pittsburgh, that's my home town, and that's why I always enjoy going up there, because what you chat about when you're meeting with friends and neighbors or at a cocktail party, is so radically different from what people talk about in Washington. I love the environment here [in Washington] because I'm interested in the things that people talk about, but its refreshing to get out and realize and get reminded that's not the kind of issue of major concern to most of the country.

In general, the foreign policy officials interviewed for this study rated the public's sophistication on foreign policy questions rather low. That most Americans are relatively unsophisticated on foreign policy matters is not, however, usually attributed to a lack of intellectual ability. It is rather attributed to a lack of information stemming from inattentiveness. The frequency of responses to items #6 and #10 from the questionnaire show this rather well:

Table 3-2: Response Frequencies to Questionnaire Items 6 & 10

	Agree		Disagree	
	Strong	Some	Some	Strong
6. "The public simply does not have the sophistication necessary to make reasonable and rational decisions on foreign policy issues." (n=65)	1	21	31	12
10. "Most people in this country simply don't pay enough attention to current events for their opinions on foreign policy issues to be meaningful." (n=65)	12	27	22	4

Most of the officials interviewed decried the lack of knowledge possessed by Americans regarding foreign policy. For the most part, this is

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attributed to the public's lack of interest - the public is thought to be considerably less interested in foreign policy questions than a democratic electorate should be. While this strain of opinion is not unanimous, judging from the Sophistication Index data presented above, as well as from statements made in interviews, it is fair to say that most foreign policy officials feel that the public is largely under-informed and under-interested in foreign policy matters.

Determinants of Sophistication Ratings

In addition to examining the attitudes which officials express about the public's sophistication, this chapter also seeks to explore factors which may explain why certain individuals demonstrate more positive evaluations than others. Multiple regression techniques will be used to examine the relative importance of a number of plausible variables. Before exploring the results of such regression, however, we examine the variables which will be factored into the analysis.

One variable to be included in regression analysis is whether or not the respondent is a Foreign Service Officer (FSO). There is something of a conventional wisdom in the American foreign policy literature that sees FSOs as being both elitist and inattentive to public opinion. If that conventional wisdom is correct, then we would expect to see lower Sophistication ratings among FSOs.

The rank of an official could also play a role in determining his or her attitude toward the public. This relationship could plausibly work in either direction, however. High ranking officials, who are less likely to be career "professionals" or who may be more sensitive to domestic political factors, may

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see public opinion in a more favorable light than lower-ranking officials. Conversely, high ranking officials, who would be most likely to feel the direct effects of public opposition to a given policy, might see such opposition as indicative of a lack of public knowledge in foreign policy.

Another factor to be considered is the age of the respondent. If there has, in fact, been a great deal of change in the attitudes of foreign policy officials since the Vietnam era, as suggested in Chapter One, as well as by Holsti and Rosenau (1984), we will want to see whether or not this represents a change in attitudes among all officials, or merely a generational, or echelon, change within the policy bureaucracy. In other words, use of this variable will help to explore whether this change is a result of changing outlooks or changing personnel.

A similar variable which will be included in the analysis measures the number of years a respondent has worked in foreign policy and/or national security bureaucracies. While it is naturally related to the respondent's age, this variable also considers the amount of government experience an individual has had, regardless of age. It takes into account, for example, the cases of political appointees who may be new to government but advanced in years, or academic "experts" brought into government as advisers (such as on the Policy Planning Staff or NSC) who may also be new to government. If there is such a thing as a "Foreign Service culture" with an attendant set of attitudes, we might expect to see those with fewer years in the government to exhibit different attitudes from those with more bureaucratic experience.

It is also logical to hypothesize that the issue environment in which a respondent works might also affect his or her ratings of the public. One might expect, for example, that officials who work in the most controversial areas of policy - those who see the most public disagreement with the policies they are

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conducting - would be most likely to give negative evaluations of the public on foreign policy matters. That is, we might expect that if an official considers him or herself to be intelligent, rational, and well-informed on the issue, then those who reach different conclusions on such a policy may be considered to be less so. Conversely, it may be expected that officials who work in policy areas where there is widespread public agreement on policy would tend to give more positive ratings to the public.

In order to test these hypotheses, two issue-based variables were created. Both are dummy variables, labeled Cleavage and Consensus. In order to create these variables, a panel of judges was recruited to evaluate the issues with which the subjects of this study deal in their foreign policy roles. Issues were evaluated as to the degree to which each could be characterized by public political controversy - Cleavage - or widespread public agreement - Consensus - or neither. Thus, issues dealt with by the respondents are coded either as showing Cleavage, or Consensus, or neither.[3] These variables were created as separate dummy variables rather than as opposite extremes of the same variable because of preliminary observations about the effects which issue cleavage and consensus had upon several subjects. That is, individuals working in areas of cleavage tended to give responses much like those in consensus issues for certain questions having to do with responsiveness to public opinion, while lack of either cleavage or consensus often predicted different behaviors. Thus, while the two variables are obviously closely related, they do not lie along a linear dimension and thus are treated as separate variables, both statistically and conceptually.

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[3] Issues were coded as neither if it was unclear whether that issue could be seen to show either consensus or cleavage. The coding of issues, coding criteria, and the composition of the coding panel are described in Appendix 3.

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Along similar lines, one might also assume that issue salience would play a role in influencing foreign policy officials' assessments of the public sophistication on foreign policy issues - the higher the issue salience, the more public opinion information available to the policy official. Accordingly, the same panel was also used to rate the public salience of each of the issues dealt with by this study's subjects. Issues were coded on a one to five scale, with five being the most and one the least most issue salience.[4] (Codings and criteria for this variables can also be seen in Appendix 3.)

A final issue-related variable which might influence officials' ratings of the public's sophistication is the degree to which each official feels constrained by public opinion. That is, if an official feels that public opinion places constraints upon him or her in the exercise of policy, he or she may feel resentful toward the public and thus be less inclined to give favorable Sophistication ratings to the public. Data for this variable are derived from a standard interview question which asked respondents whether or not they felt as if public opinion constrained them in their present position. (50 of the respondents expressed the opinion that they were so constrained, 2 gave mixed responses, while 16 said they were not constrained.)

Finally, standard items (seven point Likert scales) measuring the respondent's party identification and self-identification on a liberal/ conservative ideology scale are included in the regression analysis to determine whether party and ideology have any effect upon Sophistication Index scores. This is done on the assumption that partisan or ideological identification with the incumbent administration might affect how the

[4] The data from this variable will, for the sake of multivariate regression analysis (below), be treated as interval-level data throughout the body of this work.

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respondent views the electorate responsible for the adminstration's coming to office.

The equations presented in Table 3-3 (below) represent a fully specified equation (all variables discussed included), as well as a reduced equation representing the end point of a stepwise elimination of least significant variables, stopping when the adjusted R^2 reaches its greatest value. The decision to present a reduced equation was based upon a desire to highlight the most important variables within an equation more nearly approaching statistical significance.

Table 3-3: Fully Specified and Reduced Regression Equations, Dependent Variable = Sophistication Index Ratings

	Fully Specified Equation		Reduced Equation	
Variable	b	Standard error of b	b	Standard error of b
Age	.330 *	.241	.228 *	.130
Rank	-.141	.178		
Yrs in Govt	.001	.132		
FSO	-.022	.099		
Cleavage	-.194 *	.107	-.177 *	.043
Consensus	-.094	.092	-.083	.256
Salience	.193 *	.108	.149 *	.081
Constraint	-.015	.078		
Party ID	-.008	.187		
Ideology	.104	.230		
R^2	.156		.133	
Adjusted R2	-.024		.070	
Significance (f test)†	.570		.092	

* - $p \leq .10$
** - $p \leq .05$
† - Signifance testing has been preformed throughout this work not in order to demonstrate the applicability of results to the entire population of foreign policy officials, but rather to demonstrate the statistical robustness of certain results.
NOTE: All variables standardized prior to regression in order to facilitate comparison of b weights both within and between equations.

There are several points to be made about the results of the regression analysis. The first is that party ID and Ideology both turn out to be very weak

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predictors, never approaching statistical significance. Also, Rank, while achieving a moderate b weight, is not significant and also falls out of the reduced equation, signifying that higher ranking officials rate the public neither higher nor lower than other officials. Years of experience in the government is similarly weak - not surprising given its correlation of r = .282 with Rank. The hypothesized relationship between feelings of constraint and Sophistication ratings also fails to emerge - an official who feels constrained by public opinion is not more likely to have negative attitudes toward the public's understanding of policy.

There is a strong and significant positive relationship between age and favorable ratings of the public. Contrary to to expectation (see above), however, we do not find that older respondents rate the public more negatively than younger ones. Rather, older officials tend to give the public higher marks. Thus, the speculation above that echelon changes may explain the aggregate increase in favorable attitudes toward the public since Vietnam is invalidated. Older respondents, those who played a greater role in foreign policy making during the 1960s, actually give the public higher Sophistication ratings, suggesting that the explanation for any aggregate change in attitudes lies largely with changes in outlook among these officials.

As hypothesized, issue Cleavage turns out to have a depressing effect on Sophistication ratings. It is also interesting to note that Consensus is both statistically insignificant and in the opposite of the expected direction. Clearly, the presence of a public consensus on an issue does not, as might be expected, cause foreign policy officials to hold better feelings toward the public. Conflict over policy, as represented in the Cleavage variable, however, does seem to result in officials' feeling more negative about the sophistication of the public.

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Another statistically significant variable is issue Salience, with officials who deal with higher salience issues seeming to have more positive attitudes toward the public's sophistication in dealing with foreign policy. No obvious reason for this relationship emerges from the data, but my own experience from interviews with officials who deal with low salience issues suggests an explanation. Such officials tend to be aware that the public generally has very little knowledge both about the countries and the issues with which they deal every day. Many such officials consider their jobs - the issues they deal with - as important both for them personally and for the United States. With the knowledge that such issues are important, and with the knowledge that the public-at-large often knows or cares little about such issues, many officials in low salience positions come to resent this a lack of public awareness. An example of this is seen in the following excerpt from an interview with a desk officer (Sophistication score = 1.6 and issue Salience score of 1 [least salient]):

> One of the most difficult things for a desk officer is that, if he's dealing with a country that there's not a lot of interest in, just getting peoples' attention... In some ways, unless you're talking about a very big issue, there is no such things as public opinion... I would rather Americans did know something more about [Asian country].

Another example is this excerpt from a deputy assistant secretary (Sophistication = 2.2 and issue Salience rating of 2) who stated that,

> Because this is a relatively esoteric area of foreign policy, most people don't have a real interest. Now if you asked the average man in the street 'Do you care [about this official's issue area]?, the answer will be 'Oh yes'. But if you ask him what, if anything, he has followed or thought about in this area, the answer is he probably won't know anything about what's going on..."

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Thus, officials who work in the least salient policy areas tend to see or assume greater public ignorance than others, and thus tend to rate the public's sophistication lower than officials who deal with more salient issues about which the public has more knowledge.

One surprising result of regression analysis is the complete insignificance of membership in the Foreign Service (FSO) as a determinant of Sophistication ratings, in spite of the popular conventional image of FSOs as elitist.[5] An explanation for this result can be seen by examining the relationship between FSO and Sophistication ratings, while controlling for issue Salience. The effect of the Salience variable occurs, not surprisingly, among officials in the two lowest Salience groups. Within these lowest groups there is a disproportionate number of FSOs (as many of the non-FSOs in the policy process operate as political appointees or high-level advisers and experts); 28% of non-FSOs fall into the two lowest Salience areas, while 52% of the FSOs sampled work within these areas. As was discussed above, such low Salience issues tend to result in lower ratings of the public's sophistication, and this is so whether or not the official involved is a Foreign Service Officer. Thus, the often assumed relationship between membership in the Foreign Service and lower ratings of the public seems to result largely from the disproportionate degree to which low Salience positions are staffed by FSOs.

Finally, it must be noted that the variables which have been identified as most important in predicting Sophistication ratings explain a rather small percentage of the variance in those ratings (in the reduced equation, $R^2 = .133$, adjusted $R^2 = .070$). Undoubtedly a great deal of the variance in Sophistication

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[5] Even after several additional attempts to force FSO into regression equations, its strength and significance remained negligible.

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ratings must be ascribed to differences in personality, prior experience in dealing with the public, and other exogenous variables.

Attitudes Toward Public Input into Foreign Policy

It is somewhat surprising, given the largely negative ratings of public sophistication discussed above, that the respondents for this study advocated a rather high degree of public input into the foreign policy process. The frequency of scores on the Input Index (Table 3-4, below) shows this overall receptivity.

Table 3-4: Input Index Score Frequencies

Input Index Score	Frequency	Percent
1.0 to 1.6	0	0
1.7 to 2.2	3	5
2.3 to 2.8	21	33
2.9 to 3.4	26	41
3.5 to 4.0	13	21
	63	100

Mean = 3.08

Note: 1.0 represents least possible Input level, 4.0 represents greatest possible level of Input. Index component items may be found in Chapter 2.

The opinions which respondents expressed about the desirability of public input into the foreign policy process were more complex than those seen in evaluating the public's policy sophistication. On one hand, many expressed the idea that foreign policy officials are the experts, are best equipped to know the implications of policy decisions, and therefore should be relatively free to carry out the "best policy" on behalf of the nation. Such officials tended to emphasize the need to objectively carry out policy based primarily upon international, rather than domestic, circumstances. This

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description by an official in the Inter-American Affairs Bureau (Input Index score = 2.2) of how to make policy is an example of such an attitude:

> Unless you say to yourself 'Obviously what we're proposing here is going to cause a hell of a blast', you tend to put [public opinion] aside and decide what is the best reaction to these circumstances - what does the policy dictate that we do - and afterwards say 'OK, how can this be best explained to the public as what we should do.'

Another example of such thinking is seen in the following senior deputy assistant secretary (Input score = 2.4):

> We're not making policy with a view toward placating the public or gaining points politically or appeasing different groups. Rather we make decisions based on the foreign policy factors and figure out how we can best achieve what we want to do.

Many, if not most, of the officials interviewed displayed some degree of this kind of attitude. Yet, the idea of democratic accountability can be seen tugging many officials in the opposite direction. One deputy assistant secretary (Input Score = 3.8) expressed both attitudes virtually in the same breath.

> I think that, on the one hand, you can't simply read the morning newspapers in order to figure out what sort of policy decisions you should make that day, because you're called upon to exercise your special knowledge or to exercise leadership, so that you are not just a mirror for public opinion. At the same time, you cannot depart fundamentally from some of the basic values or elements that shapes the consensus that allows the system to continue.

A member of State's Policy Planning Staff (Input = 2.4), as another example, expressed this view:

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> Look, we live in a democracy, and its the public's right to have an impact on policy makers, but that doesn't mean that you hold up your finger and if 52% of the public says 'Do this', you do that. That's not the way the system works. You elect certain officials and entrust them to carry out certain policies on your behalf.

However, there are a sizeable number of officials, even within the ranks of senior Foreign Service Officers, who strongly feel that foreign policy is too important to be left exclusively to the experts. One highly respected deputy assistant secretary (Input = 3.8) stated,

> My own personal inclination is that by and large the executive is in need of a balance out there in the public and the chances of pursuing a policy that's either unwise or short-sighted is lessened because of the role public opinion plays.

One desk officer (Input = 3.0) stated,

> I think that we should be put on the spot to some extent; we should be forced to explain and defend our policy.

Along similar lines, an NSC staffer (Input = 3.8) stated that the imposition of constraints upon policy makers by public opinion is,

> Absolutely desirable. If you work in the White House you start with the assumption that the government is not doing the right job for the people, and you have to get in here to bring the people's will to bear on policy.

Finally, another NSC staffer (Input = 3.6) defended the desirability of public opinion's constraining policy by saying that "people [in the bureaucracy] would do kooky things perhaps if you didn't have the threat of public opinion".

Whatever their opinions may be toward the best way to make foreign policy in an ideal case, and whatever their normative predispositions, the vast

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majority of foreign policy officials I interviewed accepted the need for public input into the foreign policy process based upon political necessity. For example, a desk officer in the European Affairs bureau (Input = 3.6):

> There are some officers who have an ivory tower attitude - little pseudo-Bismarcks - who like to think that the way to make foreign policy is for them to cogitate deeply about the abstract reality of the situation, mainly in terms of U.S. national interests, and then to make a recommendation that best serves that national interest, and who get very indignant if that recommendation fails to carry the day. I think that's silly.. No foreign policy can succeed which is not acceptable to the electorate. Therefore, anyone who is involved in foreign policy, even at a relatively modest level, ought to bear in mind the state of politics and public opinion.

A senior official in the Near East & South Asia bureau (Input = 3.8) put it this way:

> If we choose to ignore public opinion, for whatever reason, it comes back to haunt the executive, in the sense that its impossible to sustain. Eventually you start loosing votes; not getting the legislation or funds necessary to implement the policy.

Another senior policy adviser in State (Input = 2.6) put the same idea as follows:

> I think the dichotomy [between best policy and policy which accounts for public opinion] is a false one, in that there can be no best policy that ignores public opinion. We live in a democracy. It is possible to conceive of policies run in a democracy that have been designed to avoid the constraints imposed by public opinion, such as those of Oliver North & Company, but it is impossible to conceive of such policies prospering over the long-run. I think our job is to attempt to maximize the best, correct

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> information, analysis, understanding of foreign policy conditions into our policy, and it is the job of our political leaders to maximize the best correct understanding of domestic constraints and realities into that policy, and you strive to get one policy out of this, and try to make it work.

The political necessity of accounting for public opinion in foreign policy decisions is widely accepted, even though most officials concede that it makes their every-day jobs more complicated. A deputy assistant secretary (Input = 3.6) described public opinion as imposing constraints which are "...positive, a nuisance frequently, but a necessary nuisance. You can't conduct a foreign policy in our system of government without having that nuisance."

The acceptance of public input and influence is described by many officials as a direct result of the foreign policies of the 1960s. For many in the foreign policy process, the lesson of Vietnam was that public opinion could not be ignored or belittled. A desk officer in European Affairs stated, for instance:

> I'm skeptical of the claim that there is all wisdom on the part of government bureaucrats or even the foreign policy elite in setting our agenda or policy. If anything, Vietnam is proof of the fact that the system can make horrendous mistakes.

The "lessons" of Vietnam are cited by many officials as requiring public input into policy.[6]

While there is some variance in normative attitudes about the desirable degree of public input into foreign policy, there is nevertheless a widely shared ethic, virtually a cultural norm, that the best policy is one which accounts for public opinion and that no policy can ultimately succeed without the support, or at the very least the acquiescence, of the American public.

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6 A more thorough discussion of the possible "lessons" of Vietnam is taken up in Chapter Nine.

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This finding is reinforced by the frequency of responses to interview questions which asked subjects to express opinions regarding the desirability of public impact upon the foreign policy process. One item, for instance, asked each respondent first to assess the degree of influence which public opinion had in the Reagan administration (all interviews were conducted prior to George Bush's inauguration), and then to state whether public opinion should have more, less, or about the same amount of influence that it had during that time.

Table 3-5: Degree of Influence Public Opinion had on Foreign Policy during Reagan Administration, By Amount of Influence Public Opinion Should have Had upon Policy

Influence Public Had During Reagan Administration...	Amount of Influence Public Opinion Should Have Had... Much Less	Some/a Bit Less	Same/ Neutral	Some/a Bit More	Totals
Slight/Little	-	-	6	-	6
Some Influence/Mixed	-	2	19	2	23
Much Influence	1	3	19	4	27
Very Much Influence	-	1	8	1	10
	1	6	52	7	66

From the responses represented in Table 3-5 it is clear that most of those interviewed think that public opinion has had influence upon foreign policy, and further that such influence is desirable. Very few think public opinion should have less influence This is so even though a large majority (48 out of 68 in a separate question) expressed the opinion that public opinion constrained their actions. The existence of such constraint is accepted and, for many, even welcomed, as seen in a follow-up item which asked individuals who felt constrained to express their assessments of whether such constraints were positive or negative (Table 3-6, following page).

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Table 3-6: Assessments of Constraints as Positive or Negative among those Feeling Constrained

	Frequency	Percent
Negative	7	15
Neutral; Mixed Response	17	35
Positive	21	43
Very Positive (volunteered)	3	6
Total	48	99

Note: Correlation with Input Index, r = .205.

By and large, these results point to a foreign policy apparatus which expresses the opinion that public input into foreign policy is both desirable and necessary. These data also show that most foreign policy officials believe that the system is, for the most part, responsive to public inputs on foreign policy matters.

Determinants of Attitudes on Public Input into Foreign Policy

To examine which factors affect officials' attitudes toward the appropriate degree of public input into policy, regression analysis will be used in much the same manner as it was earlier in this Chapter. The same variables will also be examined, at least initially. In addition, Sophistication ratings will be examined as a potential independent variable. Intuitively, one would expect some relationship between the Sophistication and Input indices; we would expect to find that a more favorable assessment of the public's sophistication on foreign policy issues would lead a respondent to express a greater need for public input into foreign policy. Conversely, low ratings of the public's

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sophistication should lead individuals to advocate minimizing the role of the public.[7]

The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 3-7, below.

Table 3-7: Fully Specified and Reduced Regression Equations, Dependent Variable = Input Index Ratings

	Fully Specified Equation		Reduced Equation	
Variable	b	Standard error of b	b	Standard error of b
Sophistication Rating	.364 * *	.088	.334 * * *	.084
Age	-.143	.149		
Yrs. in Govt.	.166 * *	.080	.141 * *	.056
Rank	-.144	.111	-.224 * * *	.081
FSO	.048	.060		
Cleavage	-.094	.067	-.092 * *	.04
Consensus	.012	.056		
Salience	.108	.067	.122 * *	.056
Constraint	-.069	.049	-.072	.046
Party ID	.101	.113		
Ideology	.183	.142	.248 * *	.107
R^2	.443		.421	
Adjusted R2	.306		.340	
Significance (f test)	.002		.000	

* - p ≤ .10
** - p ≤ .05
*** - p ≤ .01

NOTE: All variables standardized prior to regression in order to facilitate comparison of b weights both within and between equations.

The strongest relationship seen in these data is that between Sophistication ratings and Input attitudes.[8] The relationship was also quite

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[7] The casual direction which is assumed here is, of course, from Sophistication Index to Input Index. This is based primarily upon face validity. It appears plausible to say that attitudes about the public's sophistication would affect attitudes about whether or not the public should have input into policy. That attitudes on the appropriate degree of public input should affect ratings of the public's sophistication in such issues seems much less plausible.

[8] This relationship is also seen in a strong (R = .459) bi-variate relationship between these two variables.

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explicit in several interviews, such as the following from a desk officer (Sophistication = 2.2, Input = 2.4) in the African Affairs Bureau:

> I don't think any one is terribly anxious to find out more about public opinion to use as a guide to policy. The tendency in this building is you would rather not deal with it because its a wild card and its an impediment to rational policy making.

Another such example came from an office director (Sophistication = 1.6, Input = 3.0) in the Inter-American Affairs Bureau:

> If you want to talk about an informed public opinion, then I believe that its influence should be greater. The problem is that an informed, broadly based public opinion does not exist in this country.

The strength of the relationship between these indices raises the question, however, of whether or not they are measuring separate sets of attitudes. With such high levels of association between them, could the indexes be measuring fundamentally similar attitudes? Or could individual items in each index be more truly suited for inclusion in the other index? Factor analysis helps to demonstrate the distinctness of the attitudes measured by each of the indices and their component items.

In the factor analysis plot (Figure 3-1, following page), all of the index items fall along the expected factor, thus pointing toward the distinctiveness of the attitudes measured by each index. Thus, in spite of the close relationship between the Sophistication and Input indices, they can be considered as measures of distinct, even though closely related, sets of attitudes.

The effect of the Cleavage variable upon Input attitude scores is also significant and fairly strong. As was seen above with Sophistication ratings,

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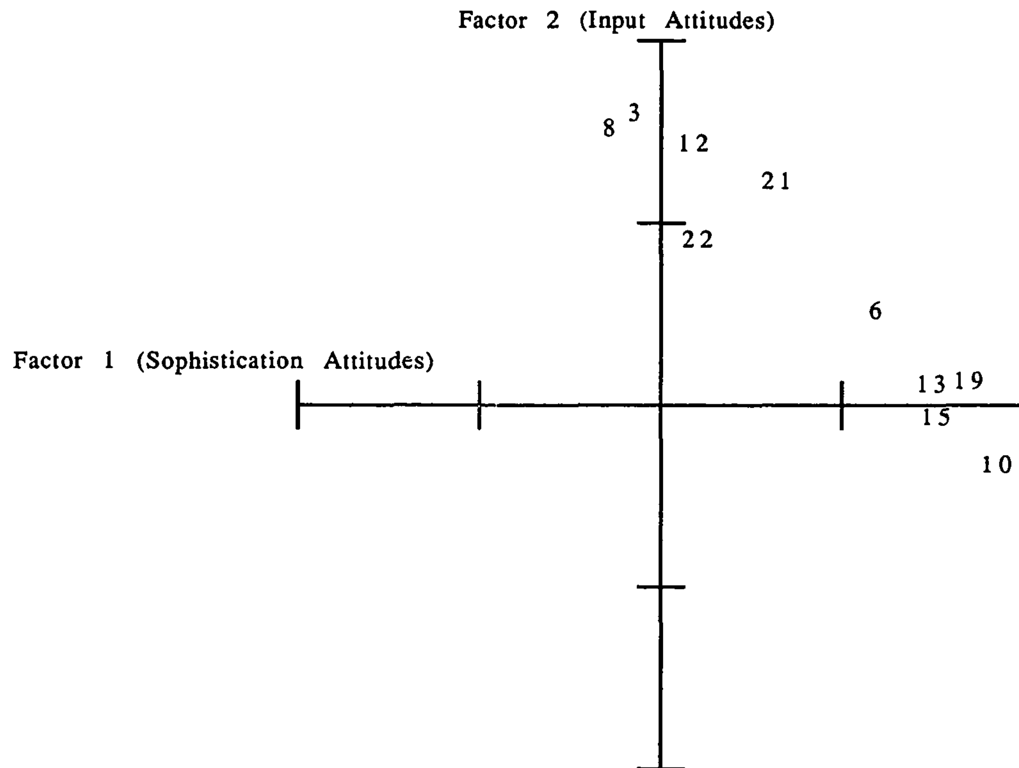
Figure 3-1: Factor Analysis of Sophistication and Input Index Component Items, Oblique Rotation* *



* - Axes appear orthogonally due to SPSSx output format.

Note: Entry numbers are questionnaire item numbers. Factor matrix scores - All components of Sophistication Index load higher than .60 on Factor 1 and between .26 and -.04 on Factor 2; all Input Index components load between .34 and -.17 on Factor 1 and higher than .66 on Factor The factor correlate with each other at .330; all Sophistication Index items correlate at better than +/- .61 with Factor 1 and no better than +/-. 25 with Factor 2; all Input Index items correlate at better than +/- .66 with Factor 2 and no beter than +/-.34 with Factor 1. Bartlett test of sphericity = .000.

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the presence of political cleavage on a respondent's primary issue area tends to depress Input index scores, this time causing respondents who work on cleavage issues to advocate somewhat less of an input role for the public than officials who do not work in such politically charged areas. Similarly, the effect of issue salience is much the same for Input index ratings as was seen for Sophistication ratings. Moreover, in explaining attitudes toward public input attitudes, issue salience is closely related to the political imperatives of considering public opinion in decisions. On low salience issues, there is little political necessity to assess public opinion or to take the consequences of negative reaction into account. High salience issues, on the other hand, carry considerable political risk and, by the nature of their salience, are highly visible to the public at large. Individuals who work in issue areas where there is a higher degree of public awareness tend not only to rate the public higher in terms of Sophistication, but also tend to hold attitudes more favorable toward public input on policy than those who work on issues about which there is little public knowledge or discussion.

Respondents' ideology. One variable which was completely insignificant in examining Sophistication attitudes, but which scores well in the regression analysis of Input ratings, is Ideology. The positive coefficient indicates that officials who identified themselves as conservative (or leaning conservative) were more likely to support a high degree of public input into foreign policy than those calling themselves liberal (or leaning liberal). Given some of the more conspicuous problems the (conservative) Reagan administration had with public opposition to policy, such as Contra aid, dealings with Iran, and (in the early years of the administration) arms control, this result appears rather surprising and requires some investigation.

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At first glance, there does not appear to be any factor inherent in ideological conservatism which necessarily favors enhancing public input on foreign policy issues. One can speculate, however, that the populism or anti-governmental emphasis which conservatives such as Ronald Reagan elucidated in the late 1970s and early 1980s might account for a greater desire for popular, as opposed to bureaucratic, influence upon policy. That such conservatives continued to advocate such an emphasis in the eighth year of a conservative administration leads one to speculate about the context in which these ideologically differentiated attitudes are found. Could the differences seen have more to do with the expressed attitudes of conservatives serving in a conservative administration, than with attitudes inherent to conservatism itself? One hypothesis along these lines is that conservatives are more likely to have interpreted the magnitude of Reagan's election and re-election victories as mandates for the policies advocated by Reagan and his conservative supporters. If this were so, such conservatives would assume public support for the administration's foreign policies, and thus would be likely to support a greater role for this supportive public in the foreign policy process.

It would appear difficult, however, to reconcile this idea of a supportive public for conservative foreign policy with the political realities of many of the Reagan administration's foreign policies. One need only look at the ongoing battles over Contra funding and polls showing widespread public opposition to the Reagan administration's policy, or the controversies over trade sanctions against South Africa and Japan, to see examples which seem at least to raise questions about, if not refute, the notion of a popular mandate in support of Reagan's foreign policies. Yet, both the data and reviews of interview notes convinces me that this hypothesis is correct - that those

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officials interviewed who identified themselves on the right side of the political spectrum perceived a public which was basically supportive of the Reagan administration's policies, and that such officials thereby felt that more public influence (or pressure) was needed to move the government toward the conservative policy goals which the electorate had endorsed. This is seen, for instance, in the quote cited above from an NSC official (self-identified at 6 [conservative] on the standard 1 to 7 ideology scale) who assumes "that the government is not doing the right job for the people, and you have to get in here to bring the people's will to bear on policy."

There is also evidence which points toward a selective perception of the issues upon which the Reagan administration faced political adversity during its tenure. Simply put, those who identify ideologically with the right saw such controversy as having been generated more by the Congress than by the public-at-large. That is, there was a tendency among such officials to conceptualize, or operationalize, public opinion as election results, whereas those officials who identified ideologically in the center or on the left, were more likely to see Congressional opposition to administration policy as a manifestation of public opinion. For conservatives, the problems which the administration had with Congress did not reflect public opposition to policy, but rather the opposition of narrowly based liberal groups. Evidence of this is seen, first. in the Table 3-8 (following page), which compares ideology with the results of an interview item which asked respondents to identify foreign policy issues where public opinion had been influential during the Reagan

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administration. The Table 3-8 lists the number of cleavage issues mentioned by respondents.[9]

Table 3-8: Comparison of Ideology Self-ID by Number of Cleavage Issues Mentioned as Areas where Public Influenced Policy during Reagan Administration

	# Cleavage Issues Mentioned Where Public Influential				
	0	1	2	3	Totals
Mild to Strong Liberal (1 to 3*)	7	7	8	1	23
Moderate (4)	5	7	5	1	18
Mild to Strong Conservative (5 to 7)	10	11	1	0	22
Totals	22	25	14	2	63

Missing Cases = 5

* - Numbers indicate equivalent on standard seven-point scale.

NOTE: Each individual response was coded with up to three issues mentioned.

Conservative foreign policy officials in their responses minimized the degree to which the public had influenced foreign policy in areas of political difficulty for the administration. In such areas, these officials seem to have attributed blame for administration problems to the Congress or special interests.

Closely related to selective perception of public influence on certain questions of foreign policy is the question of operationalization; what is, or what represents, public opinion to foreign policy officials? This question is a significant one in assessing the mechanisms of linkage between public opinion and the foreign policy process. While I do not plan to investigate this issue in this chapter (Chapter Five is devoted wholly to operationalization questions), certain aspects of the operationalization question are relevant here. Specifically, if public opinion is perceived differently by conservatives, differences in the way public opinion is operationalized should be visible for

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[9] Cleavage issues are coded as described above and in Appendix 3. The cleavage issues mentioned by respondents to this question are Central America, South Africa, Middle East, Soviet Union, and Japan.

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officials of different ideological tendencies. Indeed, this tendency is seen in the data.

During interviews, respondents were asked to identify what operationalized (or represented) public opinion to them and up to three responses were coded for each individual. When results of this item are used to correlate ideological groupings with mentions of Congress as an operationalization of public opinion, the result is both significant and in the expected direction - $t_b = -.279$ ($p = .031$). Thus, conservatives in the sample tended not to equate public opinion with the Congress. Given this result, we should also see conservatives tending to operationalize public opinion in terms of electoral results, and again, this association is seen, though it is not statistically significant - $t_b = .185$ ($p = .145$). Indeed, among the conservative identifiers interviewed, when discussing controversial issues, several attributed administration foreign policy problems to Congressional liberals or "narrow interests," and advocated greater public influence upon policy as a means to reduce the power of such interests.

Though these results are far from definitive, they seem to offer a plausible explanation for the significance of ideology in the regression equations for the Input Index. It appears as if conservative respondents in the sample, exercising either selective perception or rationalization of political setbacks, display a tendency to look favorably on public opinion and to consider the public free of blame for policy setbacks. This suggests a tendency for an administration's ideological identifiers to assume that the public supports its foreign policy goals and that political problems on foreign policy issues are attributable to political actors other than either the public itself or

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those who truly represent the public's wishes.[10] Further, there seems to be a tendency in such cases for ideological identifiers to advocate more public input into foreign policy, in order to carry out the mandate which they see the public as having given them, and to deny the representativeness of those public officials or institutions which oppose their policy goals.

Political appointees. To this point I have not addressed the remaining two significant variables in the Input Ratings regression equations - the number of years a respondent has spent in the federal government and the rank of the respondent. Each coefficient is strong and is significant at a better than <.02, yet they load in opposite directions, with years in the government positively influencing Input scores, and rank negatively affecting scores. This result is obviously highly counter-intuitive given the strong bi-variate relationship (r = .410) between these variables. Why should high seniority in terms of rank predict low scores while seniority in years predicts high scores? These data suggest that there exists a unique sub-population in the sample which displays a negative relationship between grade and years in the government, namely political appointees.[11] Note, for example, the following relationships between rank and years in the government for political and non-political appointees.

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[10] Historical evidence for this also exists; the Johnson administration's failure to come to grips with opposition to policy in Vietnam, or President Nixon's assumption of a "silent majority" which favored his Vietnam policy, come to mind.

[11] For purposes of this study I have defined political appointees as follows:
All support staff members of the President (in this case NSC staff members) and Secretary of State (in this case, the Policy Planning Staff);
All assistant secretaries;
Deputy assistant secretaries (or those of equivalent rank) on the SES (executive service) schedule, as opposed to those on the FE-MC schedule (the Foreign Service's executive service rank). Note here that FSOs who hold deputy assistant secretary positions are not considered as political appointments, but rather as departmental appointments based on merit and seniority.

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Table 3-9: Rank by Years in Government, Controlled for Political Appointees

	Non-Political Appointees			Political Appointees		
Years in Govt	Officer	Office Director (or equiv)	Dep Asst Sec'y (or equiv)	Office Director (or equiv)	Dep Asst Sec'y (or equiv)	Asst Sec'y (or equiv)
10 or less	10	-	-	1	2	4
11 to 15	8	3	-	-	3	-
16 to 20	2	5	1	2	-	-
21 to 25	1	5	3	-	-	-
More than 25	1	5	7	-	1	1
	R = .810 (p = .000)			R = -.156 (p = .297)		

Given the differences between these two groups, it is logical to assume that the factor underlying the contrasting effects of grade and years in the government upon Input scores is actually whether or not the respondent is a political appointee. The bi-variate relationship between political appointees and Input scores appears modest (r = -.148, p = .123). This result, however, may well be due to the limited number of political appointees (fourteen) in the sample. A better result is seen when this new variable is entered into the previous reduced regression equation for Input scores (from Table 3-7, above) in Table 3-10 (following page). The effects of grade, years spent in the government, and constraint effectively disappear from the equation, and when these variables are removed a strong and improved equation emerges, with the respondent's status as a political or non-political appointee loading more strongly than either issue-based variables.

Yet, this result is also somewhat surprising and very much contrary to conventional wisdom. There exists a widely held view which sees Foreign Service Officers as being most attentive to international political factors, and inattentive or indifferent to domestic political considerations (such as public

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Table 3-10: Forced Entry Regression Equations, Dependent Variable = Input Index Score

	Previous Reduced Equation (Table 3-7)			Previous Reduced, Adding Appointee			Final Reduced Equation		
	b		Std error of b	b		Std error of b	b		Std error of b
Variable									
Sophistication Rating	.334	***	.084	.374	***	.083	.384	***	.079
Yrs. in Govt.	.141	**	.056	.050		.069			
Rank	-.224	***	.081	-.064		.108			
Cleavage	-.092	**	.045	-.114	**	.045	-.116	**	.043
Salience	.122	**	.056	.130	**	.055	.122	**	.053
Constraint	-.072		.046	-.055		.045			
Ideology	.248	**	.107	.321	***	.109	.296	*	.104
Appointee				-.147	**	.069	-.179	**	.047
R^2	.421			.470			.453		
Adjusted R^2	.420			.384			.400		
Significance (f test)	.000			.000			.000		

* - $p \leq .10$
** - $p \leq .05$
*** - $p \leq .01$
NOTE: All variables standardized prior to regression.

opinion) in policy decisions. This situation is widely thought to be a major underlying factor in American presidents' mistrust of the State Department. This viewpoint is seen, for example, in a widely used textbook on American foreign policy, where there is discussion of,

> the State Department's lack of attunement to presidential needs, especially the need to be sensitive to domestic political considerations... Part of the reason for the belief that the State Department is insensitive to a president's political needs is that the department necessarily represents the interests of other countries, who are its clients, in the councils of government. (Kegley & Wittkopf, 1987:381)

This insensitivity to domestic politics is thought to be compounded by the nature of the issues with which lower and middle-level officials in the Foreign Service work. In low-level positions, there is thought to be an attitude that

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political considerations are "for the seventh floor[12]" to worry about. Conversely, assistant secretaries and their deputies, as well as staffers for both the President and Secretary of State, are considered more likely to be concerned with broader political factors - to be interested in seeing the whole political picture. Bernard Cohen saw a degree of this when he reported on a respondent who told him that, "The role of public opinion is in some sort of ratio to the level or height of one's job and to one's background and personality" (Cohen 1973:60). The findings presented here, however, indicate exactly the opposite, at least with regard to appointees.

It is easy to speculate why political appointees should be less willing to accept the input or influence of public opinion. It is not so easy, however, given the data available, to prove why this is so. One possible explanation is that Reagan political appointees are more conservative than career officials, and this conservatism is the underlying factor in the relationship. Recall, however, that conservative ideology predicts higher Input scores (Table 3-7), as opposed to the lower scores predicted by the Appointee variable. Clearly, something other than the conservatism of appointees is at work here.

Another explanation has to do with years spent in the government. If, as I have suggested above, the valuation of public input into foreign policy decisions is related to political lessons learned - that public input is considered as necessary and desirable due to the experience of past policy failures where public opinion was not considered - then more experience in the government should result in higher Input scores. However, when the status of political appointee is controlled for in regression analysis, the effects of years spent in

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[12] The seventh floor of the State Department houses the Secretary, undersecretaries', and most assistant secretaries' offices.

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the government quickly drops away to insignificance. This is seen, as well, in the simple crosstabulations in the table below.

Table 3-11: Crosstabulation: Years in Government with Input scores, Controlling for Appointees.

	Non-Political Officials				Political Appointees			
Input Scores	1.7 to 2.2	2.3 to 2.8	2.9 to 3.4	3.5 to 4.0	1.7 to 2.2	2.3 to 2.8	2.9 to 3.4	3.5 to 4.0
Years in Govt								
10 or less	1	2	5	2	-	4	6	1
11 to 15	1	5	4	1	-	2	-	1
16 to 20	-	4	4	-	-	2	-	-
21 to 25	-	2	3	4	-	-	-	-
More than 25	1	1	6	4	-	1	1	-

n = 50, R = .208, p = .076 n = 18*, R = -.276, p = .134

* - Includes four political appointees interviewed for a related case study (Powlick 1988) for whom questionnaire and demographic information is available, but who did not take part in general interviews for this study.

The relationship between years in government and Input Index scores for non-politically appointed officials is relatively strong and positive, whereas the relationship for appointees is in the opposite direction and not statistically significant (largely due to the small number of appointees in the sample.) Thus, among appointees, the hypothesis that a lack of years in the government explains lower Input scores is not only disproved, but the data actually point in the opposite direction - that more experience in the government may lead to lower Input attitude scores among political appointees.

An alternative hypothesis for explaining the relationship between political appointees and Input attitudes is based upon organizational norms. As discussed above, there seems to be a set of cultural norms among foreign policy officials emphasizing the political imperatives of public input into policy. Thus, the difference between political appointees and non-political

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appointees may be due to the presence of such an organizational culture - elite democratic norms, if you will, along the lines of V.O. Key (1961) - among career officials. Appointees, it can be speculated, may not share the group attitudes and norms of non-appointed officials. However, this hypothesis cannot be tested with the data available, and its validity must remain solely speculative.

Another possible, and even more untestable, hypothesis is that appointees, who are politically closer to the president himself and are thus more accountable to the electoral process, are more likely than career officials to feel as if the president's mandate provides them the latitude to carry out policies largely as they see fit. That is, that the president's popular standing provides those who act more directly in his name with greater freedom relative to less centrally positioned non-political appointees. Indeed, some evidence of this kind of attitude came out in a few interviews, but it was seen in both politically and non-politically appointed high-ranking officials. Unfortunately, the data are simply not available to test this hypothesis and it, too, must remain speculative.

Summary and Discussion

The attitudes which this study found among foreign policy officials regarding public opinion and its role in the foreign policy process represent something of a mixed bag. With regard to attitudes about the public sophistication and knowledge on foreign policy issues, most officials rate the public fairly low. By and large it is seen as uninformed and uninterested in foreign policy matters. There are a number of officials, however, who rate the public higher on the sophistication dimension based upon a perceived ability to understand

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and judge foreign policy issues when presented with enough information. Overall, though, officials judge public attentiveness, and thereby the information that the public has at hand, to be rather low. Variance among these sophistication ratings is best explained with reference to the issues which individuals officials deal with, though older individuals also tend to rate the public more favorably.

In spite of the generally low ratings of the public's sophistication given by officials, such attitudes do not result in the espousal of the opinion that public input into the foreign policy process should be minimized. Rather, there is a surprisingly widespread opinion among foreign policy officials that public input into, and even to some extent influence upon, the foreign policy process is both necessary and desirable; one must accept a high degree of public input and influence over policy in order to make the execution of that policy politically feasible. (It is also possible that the social desirability of positive Input responses biased these scores upward to some degree.) This said, however, and to the extent that there is variance in Input Index scores, this variance is nevertheless best explained with reference to variance in the prior set of attitudes toward the public's sophistication. Those who rate the public as most unsophisticated on foreign policy questions are likely to favor less public input into policy than others, though they nevertheless do concede the need for some influence.

Issue-based variables also play a role in influencing officials' ratings of the desirable degree of public input. Also, conservative respondents are more likely to advocate greater public input than liberals because, as I have argued, ideological identifiers of an incumbent administration tend to perceive public opinion *a priori* as supportive of their policy goals and to consider public and Congressional opinions as distinct entities. Finally, political appointees were

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seen to favor less public input into policy, contrary to the conventional wisdom of responsive political appointees and unresponsive career bureaucrats.

The results of this research also challenge another conventional wisdom - that the foreign policy bureaucracy is characterized by a desire to be free of public "meddling" in foreign policy. The attitudes which I found in the State Department of 1988 were very different from those that Cohen (1973) found in 1965-66, when the prevailing attitude was "the public be damned". In short, the changes which were hypothesized in Chapter 1 do appear, in part at least, to have taken place. My results and conclusions to a large degree coincide with the observations of one of the officials interviewed:

> I think there's a shared understanding among foreign policy officials that [public influence on policy] is legitimate. I think if you discussed these kinds of questions with people in the [State] Department twenty years ago you would get very different answers. I think the Kennan approach to public opinion was much more prevalent twenty years ago than it is today. The people who are in the State Department now are different in terms of background. I think public opinion is much more significant today, whereas in the past it was a much more elitist kind of organization.

This quotation is especially pointed, as the official in question was, at the time of our interview, a member of the Policy Planning Staff which George Kennan founded forty years earlier.

With all this said, what then of the prospects for effective linkage between public opinion and public policy, given these sets of attitudes? If an individual demonstrates a desire to be in accord with public opinion because he or she firmly believes that the aggregate public shows good judgement and can make reasoned judgements on foreign policy matters (and there were

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some officials I interviewed who did feel this way), then one would expect such individuals to feel obliged to consider and perhaps even follow public opinion on salient foreign policy matters. Doing so would, in all likelihood, not pose a problem for such persons - if the public is wise, then the bureaucrat who serves the public has few qualms about following the public's lead. Moreover, we might even expect such individuals to seek public input to ascertain not only the likelihood of political support, but also to acquire genuine feedback for use in the formulation policy.

On the other hand, if an individual feels that the public is largely uninformed and unsophisticated on foreign policy matters - that its pronouncements on policy issues are based neither in wisdom nor reason - then there would naturally be a tendency for such a person to downplay public positions which were contrary to the collective wisdom of the foreign policy experts; public opposition to policy would be considered intellectually flawed. Yet, State Department officials feel that policy which flies in the face of public opposition is unlikely to be sustained in the long run, thereby creating an imperative for policy to move into line with the public's wishes. Most officials fully believe that a policy which is likely to be opposed by the public is flawed for being infeasible. The appearance of opposition would mean, however, changing a good, intellectually solid policy, to a policy based upon uninformed public attitudes, an alternative which would obviously be distasteful for the policy maker with an interest in the policy.

There is an alternative, however, which allows for the maintenance of policy with the possibility of public support; convince the public that the policy is correct. Given that the attitude described in the previous paragraph is one I found to be predominant among foreign policy officials, one would therefore expect a tendency within the bureaucracy to be reluctant to

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abandon a policy without setting out to sell the public on it first. We might well expect, then, to see these attitudes leading toward a foreign policy apparatus as much interested in "educating" the public - giving the public the information upon which to reach the "correct" opinion - as in following the public's lead.

There is another expectation which results from examining these attitudes. This is that officials will tend not to actively seek public support unless a policy has already encountered (or is likely to encounter) visible opposition. Since public opinion itself would not be a meaningful guide to good policy, its support would not be sought for its own sake, but for the sake of sustaining policy over the long-run. If the public does not know about the issue, however, or is vaguely supportive of a policy direction already, so much the better; acquiescence in such cases is as good as support. That is, the actual imperative with regard to public opinion becomes not support, but rather the absence of opposition. Foreign policy officials may eventually bow to opposition when it comes, but in its absence, the linkage between public opinion and foreign policy is likely to be weak. Whether or not these expectations are fulfilled is a matter which will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

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Chapter 4. Institutional Public Opinion / Policy Linkage

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief examination of the linkage between public opinion and foreign policy by examining the institutional mechanisms for assessing public opinion currently in place in the Department of State and the National Security Council. A major reason why it is important to examine such mechanisms is to determine the degree of routinization - the predictability, if you will - of the process by which public attitudes are conveyed to and filtered through the foreign policy bureaucracy. While linkage can take many forms, most turns out to be less institutionalized than ad hoc.

The linkage role carried out by the news media is largely determined by the behavior of individual policy makers and officials. Certainly, the news media can communicate a great deal about public opinion to policy officials, but the amount and quality of information which an individual gleans from it is very much dependent upon which and how many sources are used, what kinds of stories are read or listened to, and how much credibility and faith the individual places in each news item. The foreign policy official can also directly transmit information to the media, via on-the-record interviews, "backgrounders",[1] and even leaks. But, again, the degree and effectiveness of such communications is largely ad hoc. If the existence of a communication link between the public and government is desirable, as we usually assume, then we might also consider it to be desirable for some aspect of this linkage to be institutionalized, in order to ensure at least a minimal degree of orderly and routinized communication. As will be shown below, however, the linkage

[1] "Backgrounders" are confidential, non-attributable interviews.

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institutions which exist in the American foreign policy process leave much to be desired.

The State Department and Public Opinion Linkage

The Bureau of Public Affairs (PA), as its name signifies, serves as the major institutional link between the public and the State Department. If the public/governmental linkage is conceptualized as bi-directional - public communicating to government and government communicating out to the public - then the PA bureau is concerned primarily with outwardly directed communications. This task is most visibly accomplished via the daily noon press briefings. Through these briefings, as well as private "background" briefings and press releases, PA functions as the department's "voice" via the news media.

Other outwardly-directed linkage efforts are carried out through other PA offices specializing in, for instance the distribution of State Department literature, and the arrangement of public programs, such as speaking tours for State officials and Department sponsored seminars and colloquia on foreign policy issues. There are also sections which deal with the planning of public affairs strategies and campaigns. The input linkage function - facilitating communication from the public to the Department - is very much a secondary aspect of the PA bureau's duties.

State and public opinion polls. The State Department's efforts to directly gauge and assess public opinion on foreign policy began in 1944 with the creation of the Division of Public Studies within the (then new) Bureau of Public Affairs. At that time, the Division commissioned its own studies of public opinion

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through the use of polling, and also served as a clipping service for publicly available information on public and editorial opinion. The output of the Division in the late 1940s and early 1950s appears to have been truly impressive, producing short daily summaries of public and editorial opinion, as well as longer weekly summaries. It also circulated summaries of the positions of major interest groups (Foster, 1959; Davison, 1949).

The commissioning of its own polls by the Division, however, was to be the cause of considerable embarrassment for the State Department in 1957. Until that time, the existence of these polls had not been publicly revealed. When a foreign aid administrator leaked public opinion data to the *Washington Star*, a Congressional investigation into the source of the information was initiated. Congress found not only that State had secretly been conducting polls for thirteen years, but that it had been paying for them out of a contingency fund authorized for international emergencies . The House Committee on Government Operations found the use of this fund to have been illegal, the polling methodology to have been careless (though this opinion seems to have resulted from the members' skepticism about polling techniques in general), and the uses of such poll data to have been suspect (U.S. House 1957). Funding cut-backs for the Division were the inevitable result of the committee's investigation. So too was the elimination of State's polling operation. To this day, the State Department may not conduct its own polls of American public opinion.

The decline of the Division of Public Studies between 1957 and 1975 was dramatic. When Bernard Cohen (1973) examined the Division in the mid-1960s, he found that the institutional linkage between public opinion and the Department which was supposed to be embodied in the Division did not, in fact, exist. Cohen attributed this to the widespread disregard for the opinion

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summaries produced by the Division. Though they had once welcomed the summaries in the late 1940s, State Department officials interviewed by Cohen were not only indifferent, but often hostile toward them. Cohen credited such attitudes with the eventual elimination of the summaries (Cohen, 1973).

In 1975 the public opinion analysis function was restored through the creation of the Office of Opinion Analysis and Plans (OAP). Frustrated by the constraints imposed by public and Congressional opinion in Vietnam and Angola, then-Secretary Henry Kissinger created the office contingent upon a number of factors. The analyses produced were to be more germane and tailored to the needs of the Department than the previous opinion summaries of the Division of Public Studies has been. It was to utilize data furnished it by several of the major polling organizations, rather than conduct its own polls. It also developed a public affairs "planning" function. OAP has never been a major institution in the State Department, however, and is currently staffed by only six professionals.

Office of Opinion Analysis and Plans: Public opinion memos. The primary means by which OAP transmits public opinion information to the State Department is through "information memoranda" which are written and distributed weekly. They are written so as to be both brief and concise, usually covering one, occasionally two, topics of foreign policy. Typically only highly salient issues are selected. Indeed, since OAP relies upon poll data collected by outside polling outfits, it often must be content to analyze issues which are of interest to private polling institutions.

OAP receives opinion data primarily from the *New York Times*/CBS, ABC/*Washington Post*, and Gallup polling organizations. The Office also enjoys a special relationship with the Roper organization, with which it has an

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arrangement to receive raw data frequencies, as well as crosstabulations. Roper is also responsive to suggestions and requests for specific kinds of questions. OAP also utilizes a number of other publicly available opinion data sources, such as the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations polls, Center for Political Studies (CPS) election studies, and the American Talk Security series.

The criteria for the production of memos are supposedly tailored to OAP's audience in the State Department. Memos must be short; the staff are adamant that any item over three pages will not be read by officials in the Department. This creates something of a balancing act in reconciling the need for analysis with the need to keep the information intelligible to consumers who are not primarily social scientists and who have little time to devote to such memos. The result is, in fact, that there is often a minimum of analysis in the memos; they typically report poll results - simple frequencies and occasional crosstabulations - with some highlighted demographic features. The memos usually do not discuss the possible motivations underlying patterns of opinion, nor do they attempt to assess the potential implications of the opinion data they report.

The typical public opinion information memo is distributed to individuals on a mailing list of between one and two hundred. This list varies considerably with the issue area of the memo; most recipients see only memos relevant to their area specialty. All public affairs advisers within the regional bureaus receive these memos, however, as do the Secretary and several other policy-level officials in the Department. An abbreviated version of each memo is also cabled to American embassies abroad.

For the most part, OAP public opinion memos simply report poll results. The wording of questions, for instance, is rarely analyzed critically in order to alert the foreign policy official to potential problems with the poll's results.

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Nor are other possible questions raised, such as public opinion "rally effects" (Mueller 1973) during crises, or the possibility that respondents may lack knowledge on a given topic. Occasional exceptions to this generalization do occur, however.[2] OAP opinion memos also report responses to poll questions without discussing the attitudes which might underlie them. When interviewing in OAP, I found that there is a widespread feeling among its staff that most foreign policy officials have a fundamental misunderstanding of the public and the meaning of public opinion results. Yet, OAP memos, by simply reporting opinion poll results, often do not contribute to any greater understanding among foreign policy officials of the bases of the public's feelings and attitudes on foreign policy.

Officials in OAP are not unaware that their memos lack analytical depth, or that they fail to address the roots of the public's attitudes on foreign policy. OAP justifies this in many ways. There is a feeling, for example, that greater analysis entails diminishing returns; that in going beyond simple crosstabulations, not much more can be said that is useful to anyone other than the public opinion specialist. Perhaps a more satisfying reasoning is that the bureaucratic environment is thought to impose restrictions upon the writers of the public opinion memos. For example, if a memo is more than three pages, it is felt by OAP, it will not be read by those who receive it. The same kind of constraint applies to analytical sophistication. The audience is

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[2] For instance, when OAP reported the results of an ABC News poll taken in the immediate wake of President Reagan's televised speech (October 27, 1983) on the Beirut barracks explosion and the invasion of Grenada, the memo explicitly warned against using the poll results to argue for the persuasiveness of the President's speech, citing opinion "rally" effects and methodological problems with the poll itself (PA/OAP Memo, October 28, 1983). This memo is highly exceptional, however. Of the dozens of such memos I have examined, it is the only one to spell out such explicit qualifiers about opinion poll results.

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seen to be a busy one, with many memos to read and little time or mental energy to spare. To make memos more analytical would impose greater demands upon readers, thus "turning them off" and deterring them from reading future memos. In these ways, OAP seeks to ensure the relevance and utility of its products for its audience throughout the State Department.

While OAP's desire to maintain its audience is certainly understandable, its methods for doing so are based primarily upon intuitively valid assumptions about what bureaucrats will and will not read. Yet there is little or no feedback; OAP has no direct way of knowing whether or not their memos are actually being read, whether they are considered important, whether they provide the kind of information which officials want and need to know, or whether the issues they examine are the ones their audience wishes to know about.[3]

OAP public opinion memos and the State audience. Perhaps the clearest test of the utility of OAP's public opinion memos as linkage mechanisms is the value which their recipients place upon them. During my interviews, each respondent was asked to name the sources by which he or she keeps track of public opinion. Of sixty two non-PA officials interviewed at State, 13 (or 21%) spontaneously mentioned OAP memos as a source of public opinion information. In a later series of direct questions about OAP memos, the vast majority of respondents indicated that they were aware of the existence of the OAP memos (57 of 62, or 92%), and most of these (54 of 57) indicated that they do periodically see or receive these memos. Respondents were also asked a

[3] This fact was impressed upon me when I was told by several people in the Office that they are hoping that I, through my research in the Department, would be able to give them the answers to the questions "which we can't ask ourselves."

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number of follow-up questions about OAP memos. The first of these asked each to indicate how carefully he or she reads the memos when they are received. Of the fifty four who reported receiving them, only twelve indicated that they usually or sometimes read them carefully, while a total of thirty eight indicated that they only skimmed them, with four (probably an underestimated number) admitting that they did not read them at all.

At first this would seem to be a discouraging result; the linkage cannot be terribly strong if the institutional vehicle of linkage is barely glanced at or even ignored by 78% of those who see them. But if it can be assumed (as those in OAP do) that useful information about public opinion can be transmitted to an audience which skims a three-page memo, then we will want to know the degree to which that information is considered useful and important to the target audience.[4] There are several ways to approach this. One is simply to follow-up the previous question - to ask why the respondent does or does not read the memos carefully. Another means of assessing how the audience for these opinion memos rate them is to ask respondents how important the OAP memos are to them in determining what public opinion is on their issues, and why are they important or not important. The frequencies of responses to both of the questions are crosstabulated with their follow-up explanations in Tables 4-1 and 4-2 (following page). As these tables make clear, most of the State Department officials interviewed who were both aware of and received OAP public opinion memos indicated that they neither read them carefully nor place great faith in them as useful sources of information about public

[4] It can easily be argued, of course, that little useful information can be acquired by skimming a short memorandum on a topic as complex and varied as public opinion on foreign policy.

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Table 4-1: How Carefully Read OAP Memos, by Follow-Up Why/Why Not?

Why/Why Not?	How Carefully Does Respondent Read OAP Public Opinion Memos? Not Read At All	Reads Briefly/ Skims	Sometimes Reads Carefully	Usually/ Always Carefully
Distrust of Polls	-	5	-	-
Memos Rarely Relevant to Resp.	3	13	-	-
No Time to Read Memos	1	9	-	-
Already Has Sense of Public Opinion	-	8	-	-
Public Opinion Info Unnecessary for Resp.	-	1	-	-
Memos Themselves Well-Done	-	-	1	1
Important Only if Show Major Opinion Change	-	1	1	-
Personal Interest in Topic (public opinion)	-	-	-	1
Needs to Know All Available Info re Issues	-	-	6	2
	4	37	8	4

Table 4-2: Importance of OAP Memos, by Reason Important/Not Important

Why Important/Not Important?	How Important are OAP Memos To Respondent in Assessing Public Opinion? Not at all Important	Slightly Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Distrust of Polls	1	6	-	-
Memos Rarely Relevant to Respondent	3	6	1	-
No Time to Read Memos	1	-	1	-
Already Has Sense of Public Opinion	2	12	-	-
Public Opinion Info Unnecessary for Resp.	1	1	-	-
Memos Themselves Well-done	-	-	2	2
Memos do not Contain Good Analysis	-	1	-	-
Reinforce Own Impressions	-	-	8	-
Give more Specific Info than Other Source	-	-	2	-
OAP Memos Do not Show Biases	-	-	1	2
Provide Info to Reinforce Policy	-	-	1	-
	8	26	16	4

opinion.[5] In line with the expectations of officials in OAP, there are some individuals who indicate that they do not read the memos carefully because of time constraints. However, only nine respondents gave this reason for not reading carefully and only one used lack of time to indicate why the memos are not important to him or her. Thus, time constraints seem to be less

[5] The correlation between the "How carefully do you read..." and "How important in assessing public opinion..." questions is, as one would expect, strong and positive - $r = .452$.

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important than is assumed by OAP. Why, then, are the memos not widely considered important? Individual explanations fall largely into three categories: the relevance (or irrelevance) of the data, distrust of poll methodology, and the redundancy and/or superfluity of the memos themselves.

The fact that memos summarizing public opinion poll data are not considered important by a large proportion of State Department officials is not unexpected, given the type of issues which public opinion polls typically address. Most often, the OAP memos portray public opinion on highly salient issues - understandable, given that the Department is barred from carrying out its own polls and must rely on polls conducted by commercial outfits. Thus, officials who work on low salience issues or countries usually find very little information of direct interest to them in the OAP memos. This quote, for instance, is typical: "I see them but I don't [read them.] Generally they don't touch on our issues so I don't read them."

While it is by no means a hard and fast rule, the relationship between salience, and reading of the memos is seen in the following table.

Table 4- 3: Issue Salience Scores,* by Reading of OAP Opinion Memos

	Salience				
	None	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
How Carefully Read Memos					
Not at all	2	1	1	-	-
Brief/Skim	11	8	5	6	8
Sometimes Carefully	-	3	3	1	1
Usually/Always Carefully	-	1	-	1	2
	13	13	9	8	11

$r = .277$, $p = .021$

* - Issue salience scores are the same as used in Chapter 3 and as described in Appendix 3.

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A stronger relationship between issue salience and the importance of OAP memos to respondents is seen in comparing salience scores with whether or not individuals spontaneously mentioned the memos as a source of public opinion information before being asked about them directly. This is seen in Table 4-4 below.

Table 4-4: Volunteered Mentions of OAP Memos by Respondent's Issue Salience

	Respondents' Issue Salience					
	None	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Totals
Volunteered OAP Memos As Public Opinion Info Source	1	2	2	3	5	13
Did Not Volunteer OAP Memos as Public Opinion Info Source	14	13	8	6	8	49

r = .299, p = .009

That a fairly large proportion of officials do not utilize or find the Department's public opinion memos useful may thus be seen largely as a problem basic to the system of public opinion polling in the United States and with the systemic factors which determine whether an issue will be of high or low salience. It is inevitable that, for many officials, public opinion memos will have little or nor relevance - that such memos will address high salience issues which are not relevant to many officials There are, however, a large number of respondents who ignore or only skim OAP memos even though they work on highly salient issues. For these individuals, different explanations obviously apply.

Another class of explanations for poor ratings of State's public opinion memos has to do with distrust of the methodology or nature of public opinion polling itself. Some see the problems of polls in terms of what polls measure.

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Poll responses are sees as superficial and artificial measures of attitudes. The following example illustrates this skepticism:

> I see them. I don't pay much attention to it actually. It doesn't mean very much to me when I see that 52% of people support something. That's not the way you get a feel for what people think. You don't really know what's on their minds until you talk to them. That's the only way to find out what's driving it. That's why I try to pay attention to what Congressmen are saying or why you should talk to your friends at home...

Another individual mixed doubts about the superficiality of information reported in polls with skepticism about the depth of knowledge of poll respondents.

> [The importance of memos is] minimal because they're telling us what people who don't know the facts think. I think that most public opinion polls are going to give you a sense of what people think in their gut, but they won't tell you whether to give Kuwait the Maverick D or G.

Such concern about the depth of knowledge which poll respondents bring to bear upon poll responses is common, and is also used as a justification for not using public opinion poll results as a guide to policy.

Another type of concern about the nature of the poll results has to do with their short-term nature. Many officials prefer to have information about broad, long-term attitudes, rather than to know how responses between two narrow time points differ. The following response demonstrated this concern well:

> We have a public affairs office here which circulates around the building the latest public opinion polls on attitudes toward the Soviet Union or policies toward NATO, and I confess, I don't think its critical to read them all the time and see the minor swings in opinion. Its sort of the basic

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> trends that you need to be attentive to. If there's a growing alarm about allied burdensharing, or a sense that our policies regarding trade with the Soviet Union are counterproductive and there's a groundswell of criticism, these are things we have to watch. But whether people have a higher opinion of Gorbachev in July than in September, that's something we don't pay much attention to.

Obviously, the fact that many officials express doubts about the nature of public opinion polls has implications for how they approach (or choose not to approach) in-house memoranda summarizing such polls. These attitudes, however, also suggest implications regarding the overall interpretation of public opinion - If officials do not trust polls, but want to be in congruence with public opinion, what then represents public opinion? This is an important issue and will be addressed in Chapter Five.

The largest class of explanations as to why respondents do or do not consider State's public opinion memos important has to do with redundancy. Many officials who work on highly salient issues feel it is imperative to keep abreast of public opinion on their issues. Thus, they closely follow the newsmedia, taking note of polls, editorials, and other stories. Such officials are often directly aware of public attitudes from having spoken to groups around the country. Thus, OAP memos do not greatly enhance their understanding of public opinion. One Policy Planning Staff member interviewed was keenly interested in public opinion, but his evaluation of OAP memos was that, "They're not all that useful. They tend to corroborate other stuff that I get." Similarly, the following answer to the question of how important OAP memos are from an official working primarily on Central American policy shows that the memos are often seen to have both a redundancy and a timeliness problem.

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> Oh geez, on a scale of one to ten with ten the lowest, I'd say a nine and a half or something. If you were to give me the circumstances of an event, I could tell you within a few points how that's going to play, and a month from now, when PA comes out with their analysis of how it played, I'm not going to be far off.

The quote above also highlights the fact that, regardless of whether or not they work on salient issues, many officials feel as if their political instincts are sufficient to give them a sense of how the public has reacted, or will react, to a given policy. Responses along these lines were quite common, as the following excerpts demonstrate:

> On a scale of one to ten, [I would rate OAP memos' importance] about a five. They confirm, usually, what we think is happening. I have not been surprised by the PA findings, generally speaking.

> I wasn't born yesterday. I've been around for quite a while and I have a feel for a lot of these things, but to the extent to [which the memos] help, I'll read them.

Interestingly, however, there are individuals who see such redundancy positively. That departmental public opinion memos confirm the impressions they have already gained on their own gives them greater confidence both in the specific conclusions involved, but also in their own abilities to assess and interpret public attitudes.

Some positive evaluations of OAP's output were also given by respondents. A small number of individuals liked the memos because they condensed many pieces of information into small packages. A few also indicated that they appreciate the fact that the poll results presented in them are not subject to the biases which they feel the news media demonstrate in

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the reporting of poll results. One official also found the memos useful in cases such as the following:

> If I were preparing testimony [before Congress] I might want to be able to say 'in a recent poll...' Having access to that kind of information at the right time can be very useful.

Another official, who generally looked negatively at OAP memos, also indicated that he occasionally found them useful for a similar purpose.

> They rarely contain surprises. What they give you is a number which you can cite if you want to, and, once or twice, in fact, I have used these numbers in memos that I was writing for someone on the seventh floor. It gives you a fairly authoritative number which you can use if you want, rather than just writing in loose terms that something is unpopular.

In examples such as this, however, PA/OAP memos serve less of a linkage function than a policy-reinforcing function. Thus, while public opinion information in such cases can be useful for the officials involved, their linkage role in these cases is highly questionable.

Occasionally, bureaucratic suspicion or hostility enters into judgements of OAP memos and of the Public Affairs bureau generally. Officials sometimes feel as if information sent to them by other bureaus is an infringement upon their own turf. Sometimes there may also be a suspicion that the outside bureau has its own program to sell - that its interests may not be the same as those of the official's own bureau. Various shades of such suspicions are seen in the two following excerpts from office directors in separate geographic bureaus.

> I'm a little bit mistrustful [of OAP]. They have never hesitated to pull punches. When public opinion is opposed to what the administration is doing, they've laid it out. They've been very fair about that. There's just

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> something about it that I don't trust. I'd rather read it from Roper than from PA. I take into account what they write, but I've got a government official's skepticism about what other government officials write.
>
> I give them a cursory glance - no more - part of the time because its repetitive, part of the time because it comes from an outside source. We, as a regional bureau, are sovereign as we see it here, and when PA talks about public opinion it is meddling in our preserve.... What they have to say is interesting, and it becomes another factor to take into account, but it is certainly not determinitive and often not even important.

Thus, even though public opinion memos are generated from within the same department, the simple fact that they come from another bureau may cause them to be met with suspicion by their audience.

All in all, public opinion memos within the State Department do not serve a particularly useful role for most respondents. The Department audience for which they are intended simply does not make much of an effort to read and digest them. When they are read, they are usually considered irrelevant, redundant, or simply unreliable. The few individuals who do utilize them do so largely because they confirm impressions which they already have gained themselves. Thus, as a device for maintaining an input link from public opinion to foreign policy officials, OAP memos serve only a very minor role.

Office of Opinion Analysis and Plan: Editorial opinion memos. OAP also serves as an input link through its production of editorial opinion information memos. The operation on editorial opinion is even smaller than that on public opinion, employing one professional with a part-time assistant. The Office

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contracts with a clipping service which forwards copies of editorials on foreign policy issues from about one hundred regional newspapers in the U.S. The product of these efforts is another set of weekly information memos. Like the public opinion memos, these editorial opinion memos usually deal with a single, highly salient topic. They are essentially summaries of editorial positions from papers across the country and often end with a "scorecard," listing individual papers in favor of, and opposed to, a given policy. They are distributed in much the same manner as the public opinion memos.

OAP editorial memos are used (or not used) throughout the Department in largely the same manner as OAP's public opinion memos. Like them, editorial opinion memos are considered largely redundant, for if an editorial on a particular topic appears in a major newspaper, the officials who deal with that topic will see it long before a memos arrives from Public Affairs. These memos also suffer from the same relevance problem. Because editorials rarely are written concerning minor issues, officials who deal with such issues see editorial opinion as irrelevant to them. To the extent that they are useful, they serve merely as reinforcements to the impressions which officials gain through following the major newsmedia on their own.

Office of Opinion Analysis and Plans: Public opinion briefings. An additional, though rare, form of input linkage occurs when OAP public opinion analysts are called upon to provide briefings to policy makers. Such briefings provide the OAP analysts the chance to present more in-depth information than the restricted format of the opinion memos allows. Such briefings are probably the best means of linking public opinion to foreign policy through OAP, for they provide OAP with an opportunity to speak directly to those making policy (rather than to simply send a memo and hope they read it). Yet, such

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briefings have remained rare occurrences (less than once a year), even though they are potentially OAP's best means of providing foreign policy decision makers with public opinion information.

Office of Opinion Analysis and Plans: Planning. OAP also serves a dual input/output linkage function through its "plans" side. Public affairs campaigns and strategies, speaking tours, and departmental publications are usually subject to the examination of the planning officers within OAP. This occurs through the participation of OAP planning officers on various public affairs working and inter-agency groups, and through the Public Affairs bureau clearance processes.

The OAP planning officers have the distinct advantage of working in daily contact with the office's editorial and public opinion analysts, thus giving them the information necessary to serve a two-way linkage role. They are aware of public opinion and attitudes to a greater extent than are most Department officials, and they are able to bring that information to bear upon the planning of communications efforts aimed toward the public. However, since 1987, the plans function of OAP - its planning "turf" if you will - has been partially shifted to a new Office of Public Diplomacy (PD). This office was created to plan and coordinate public diplomacy campaigns both for the PA bureau and for the Department as a whole. As of December 1988, there was considerable competition between these two offices, brought about through unclear functional differentiation, the persistence of traditional bureaucratic channels and methods of operation (in favor of OAP), and tremendous differences between the offices in terms of public affairs strategies and philosophies.

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Among OAP's planning officers there is a feeling that the rest of the Department does not understand the public and is unable to present information in such a way that the public will grasp it. A dominant theme in several interviews in OAP was that most officials in State do not have a realistic picture of the American public. According to OAP officials this is seen in the attitude of Department officials (Foreign Service Officers in particular) that public affairs campaigns can be used to change public opinion. The following passage from an interview with an OAP planner, is his description of how most officials in the State Department approach public affairs:

> "We have the truth, we give it to the public, the public is rational, they buy it, and therefore we've persuaded them." There are a lot of people around here who believe its a simple-minded process like that, and that because we are the State Department - because the Secretary of State has said something - that people out there are going to want to listen to it, digest it, be persuaded by it, and act on it. Now that's an awful lot of assumptions to be made about the way things work in public affairs... And I would say, as a practitioner... that's not the way it works.

This official also described the prevalent feeling in State that anyone can become a public affairs expert overnight, leading to the creation of public affairs plans such as the following example:

> "Objective: 1. To seize the moral high ground on this issue. 2. To turn the public around on this issue." Whenever I saw that on a piece of paper I would underline it in red. First, I would say "What the hell do you mean by seizing the moral initiative and turning the public around?" And number two, its totally unrealistic and infeasible to talk in terms of turning the public around. What are you talking about?

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Later, this respondent went on to cite the intense "public diplomacy" campaign mounted to move public opinion on Central American in the mid-1980s as an example of actions based upon the misguided assumption that public opinion on foreign policy "can be turned" by government public affairs campaigns.

The dominant OAP public affairs strategy is to provide attentive publics with information about a given policy. OAP planners tend to assume that the public-at-large is not receptive to information on issues which are far from their lives or about which they have no pressing interest. Thus, public affairs plans often involve speeches to interest groups and informational mailings to those already on the Department's mailing list. This often involves targetting groups already known to support the administration's policy on these issues. Such activities are often characterized as "solidifying support" for a policy.

In the meetings and discussions which go into creating public affairs strategies and plans, OAP planners have direct communication with other public affairs officials, as well as those more directly responsible for foreign policy. Existing as it does as a junction for both public opinion input and public affairs output, OAP has been able to influence the manner in which State communicates with the public. They are thus often able to moderate the tendency to mount intense public affairs campaigns aimed at "turning the public around" on important policy issues.

More often than not, the information provided by OAP planners has little effect upon actual policy. Cases in which OAP officials know they have had a policy impact are rare. The ratification of the Panama Canal treaties is one example where, according to those in OAP, their information was well-

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received by policy makers and their warnings about potential adverse public reaction was heeded.[6] Such cases are, by far, the exception, however.

Central America is one area where OAP's influence failed to restrain the public affairs impulses of the Reagan administration. Over the first five years of the administration, a great deal of effort was spent attempting to convince the public to support the Nicaraguan Contras. Yet the effect reflected in public opinion polls was marginal. It is because of cases such as Contra funding, where OAP advice was ignored and the public affairs campaign failed, however, that OAP planners feel they are able to slowly build a reputation for reliability and good advice. OAP planners feels they have earned a measure of "grudging respect" from within the Department, though the fact that such respect is grudging often results in an inability to moderate manipulative tendencies.

Obviously, public affairs campaigns in foreign policy must walk a fine line between providing information on the one hand, and manipulating the public and lobbying on the other. The influence of OAP seems to push the Department's public affairs activities away from manipulation and toward the provision of information.[7]

The Office of Public Diplomacy. The other organization involved in State's public affairs planning, the Office of Public Diplomacy, is the culmination of various efforts by the Reagan administration to use new public affairs techniques - termed "public diplomacy" - in support of policy. The very term "public diplomacy" is one which has no precise definition. Usually, the term

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6 See Moffett, 1985 for more on OAP, public opinion, and the Panama Canal Treaties.

7 The question of education versus manipulation will be considered further in Chapter Ten.

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implies a public extension of private diplomacy, that is, improving relations abroad through public, as opposed to private, communication. Public diplomacy conveys the idea "that by communicating directly with the people of other countries we may be able to affect their thinking in ways beneficial to ourselves, "the objective being "to influence the behavior of a foreign government by influencing the attitudes of its citizens" (Malone 1988:2-3). The term also has come to imply the use of the most modern technological means available in the pursuit of such policy goals. As it came to be used in the Reagan administration, however, public diplomacy included all public activities and political aspects of foreign policy, including speeches and other appearances by high ranking officials, and the "support and cultivation of political groups and forces" that might "serve the long-term interests of the United States and the West generally" (Lord 1984). Thus, public diplomacy, was eventually defined in a National Security Decision Directive in 1983 as "those actions of the U.S. Government designed to generate support for our national security objectives."[8]

This broader definition thus came to include a domestic component embodied, in particular, by the State Department's Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean within the Inter-American Affairs bureau.[9] This new office was described as representative of "a new concept in the way foreign policy is made. The public affairs office is traditionally reactive to the news. There's never been an office that tries to educate the public the way we do..."[10] After the Office's demise (see footnote 8, below), its

[8] National Security Decision Directive 77 (NSDD-77), January 14, 1983.

[9] The now-defunct office became the center of a controversy between Congress and the Reagan administration, fueled by a General Accounting Office report which characterized its activities as "a prohibited, covert, domestic propaganda campaign".

[10] *Washington Post*, October 15, 1985, P. A21.

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functions were transferred to the Public Affairs bureau and came to include all areas of foreign policy. Contrary to the generally accepted definition of public diplomacy as dealing with international efforts at persuasion, the resultant Public Diplomacy Office (PD) in the Public Affairs bureau is specifically designed to plan and coordinate public diplomacy campaigns aimed at the American public.

The philosophy and strategies advocated by the new Public Diplomacy office are very different from those of OAP, thus contributing to the bureaucratic rivalry between the two offices. PD sees itself as trying to bring State Department public affairs into the Twentieth Century by using modern technology and sales techniques. Interviewing in PD, I was told that use of the techniques of Coca-Cola - easy slogans, good images, emphasis on sales - in order to create support for policy was PD's goal for the Department's public affairs strategies.

Like OAP, PD has problems dealing with the Foreign Service. One reason for this, as seen in PD, is the image-conscious conservatism of most FSOs. PD sees most of the Department as preferring a "*New York Times* approach" to public affairs, while it prefers "*USA-Today*" public affairs efforts. As one PD official put it, "A big part of my job is what we do inside the building to get old-fashioned bureaucrats to use the new technology." PD does not see its role as either manipulative or propagandistic, however. Rather, public diplomacy is seen as "education" of the public; getting the facts out to the public in order that they reach the obvious conclusion - to agree with the policy in question.

The Public Diplomacy office, like OAP, also has problems with other officials in State because most officials continue to see public affairs as a means of "damage control" when policies encounter opposition. PD sees public diplomacy as a necessary accompaniment to the implementation of policy,

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rather than as a means to counter opposition to policy. Selling policy at an early stage of implementation is seen as a prophylactic against adverse public reaction. OAP, on the other hand, prefers to see policy which is designed to be in congruence with public opinion at its inception, rather than for policy to be dependent upon subsequent public affairs campaigns to create support. PD advocates a "best policy first" approach which considers public opinion as an element necessary for successful implementation, but as a secondary decision factor.

If, as the officials in OAP indicate, most State Department officials prefer to worry about public opinion only when a policy encounters opposition, most of these officials indicated to me that the type of public affairs campaign they prefer is that which is typically favored by OAP - communicating with interested and informed audiences - rather than that advocated by PD - a mass foreign policy "sales" campaign. While most officials seem perfectly willing to attempt to convince the public that a given policy is correct,[11] they prefer to do so by presenting information in as objective a fashion as possible. They prefer to "sell" policy based upon the merits of the argument rather than based upon slogans or ideological tenets. Most foreign policy officials in State are therefore rather uncomfortable with the very concept of public diplomacy.

According to a high-level PA official interviewed, the existence of the PD office is the result of the efforts by State political appointees to create a mechanism for the pursuit of the Reagan administration's ideological goals in foreign policy, while the persistence of OAP's planning functions is the result of the the Foreign Service's distaste for the public diplomacy approach. The

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[11] As will be seen in subsequent chapters, this inclination to "educate" the public in reaction to opposition is widespread.

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following excerpt from a regional bureau office director exemplifies the attitude among FSOs about public diplomacy :

> First, if I think a course of action is right and everyone is arrayed against me, I'm nonetheless going to try to persuade them as to why I think I'm right. So you do mount a public affairs campaign. To the degree that the logic and rationale has merit, it is not infrequently seen to have merit and you'll be able to make your case. If your argument is specious or ideological and you end up publishing white papers on why we should be doing whatever it is we're doing to hit the Sandinistas in the groin, then all your screams carry no weight whatsoever. The Department's repeated broadsides against Nicaragua have come to no particular end. I think that the public diplomacy effort has been more or less a universal failure. My problem with public diplomacy is that public diplomacy sections tend to be ideological advocates, rather then explaining a policy and listening to an answer and questions. I guess what I really have a problem with in public diplomacy is the compulsion to convince people you're right. I feel an obligation to explain. Its legal, its moral, its ethical to explain why we're doing what we're doing, but I don't feel any particular compulsion to convince people that we're right.

Thus, one factor greatly hampering the effectiveness of the PD office is the lack of acceptance it faces throughout the foreign policy bureaucracy.

While the resistance which PD faces to some extent inhibits a particular aspect of State's output linkage, it has the effect of enhancing the input side of the public/government linkage mechanism. The PD office was created in order to build public support for policies which were made in spite of public opinion to the contrary. The very public diplomacy concept as it has come to be used in dealing with the American public is as a tool for the implementation

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of policy which often seems to ignore public opinion. If public diplomacy efforts ever became truly effective, then the degree to which a policy is initially congruent with public desires would no longer be a measure of its quality. Rather, the degree to which a policy could be easily sold to the public, rather than the initial consideration of public attitudes, would become a major factor. Thus, in a somewhat distorted fashion, the obstruction of the Public Diplomacy Office by the career bureaucrats of State serves as an enhancement of the public's link to the foreign policy process.

Speaker feedback. Another institutional linkage mechanism used by State is the arrangement of speaking tours for Department officials. Tours are arranged in response to requests by organizations or groups for speakers on particular topics. Such tours serve a dual linkage purpose. The first, and most obvious, is that they provide the Department with opportunities to explain policy - to educate - an interested segment of the public. Another communications link, however, is established through the comments and questions of audiences. The Department feels that gauging the reactions of audiences to its speakers is a useful means of determining the kinds of issues and questions which are important to people in a more direct and engaging manner than is otherwise possible through the analysis of polls or editorials. Thus, when individual officials complete each speaking engagement, they are required to complete audience feedback forms, which are then systematically compiled and compared in the Opinion Analysis and Plans office. Periodic memoranda summarizing and describing the results of such audience feedback are then prepared and distributed throughout the Department.

Both the public speakership program and the resultant feedback receive nearly universal approval from those in the Department who are

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familiar with them. They are especially valued by those officials who actually participate in speaking tours. One office director commented,

> I think the public speakers program which gets people like me out [has been] successful. The audiences are small, but they tend to be respectful and attentive and interested, and they tend to be relatively balanced, and in return you get the feedback from them.

To the extent that officials are willing to speak and that groups are willing to listen and respond, this is an excellent linkage device. Needless to say, however, there are several drawbacks. One obvious drawback is that groups must first request a speaker on a given topic. Thus, as with so many other forms of public opinion linkage, the program deals largely in issues of high salience. Because there must first be an interested audience, this feedback is necessarily based upon the opinions of an unusually interested and attentive public. While this can well be seen as a positive aspect, in that the feedback is likely to be of high quality and relatively well-informed, it nevertheless is not representative of the opinions of the public-at-large.

Mail. Another potential linkage device is incoming mail. Issue oriented mail addressed to the Department is routed to the office or country desk relevant to the issue addressed in each letter.[12] For some offices, this obviously means a large volume of citizen generated correspondence, while for others, mail from the outside is a rare occurrence. By routing mail in this way, the relevant working-level officials may become aware of the degree of public concern on a given issue, and also may be able to understand the rationale for such

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[12] E.g. a letter objecting to ongoing aid to the Nicaraguan Contras would be routed to the Central American Affairs office; a letter calling for more aid to Poland to the Poland desk officer, and so on.

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concerns. However, such mail is often more of a nuisance than a help to working-level officials, for such mail, once received, must to be answered.

Incoming mail does not serve a very effective linkage function due to the perception among foreign policy policy officials that it represents the opinions of rather small segments of the public. Rather than representing the public as a whole or what many officials consider to be broader public interests, mail represents a particularly vocal and anomalous subset of the public. One official, referring to incoming mail, explained,

> We can quantify public opinion on the basis of letters we receive from interested Americans. Now that's danger area, because obviously only someone who is genuinely concerned and may even be an activist will even bother to write the Secretary and bitch about policy or support policy, whichever it may be. One has to accept those expressions as representative of some element, if not a significant element, of public opinion.

Thus, while incoming mail does serve to inform foreign policy officials what an aroused segment of the public thinks about a given issue, that information is not considered representative of the public-at-large, and is thus often discounted as an expression of public opinion.

Public Affairs Advisers. In addition to the Bureau of Public Affairs, each of the five geographic bureaus of State has its own public affairs adviser (PAA) and public affairs office. The title of public affairs adviser is, however, somewhat misleading. The role of PAA is more along the lines of a news media liaison than an adviser on public affairs. The PAA's office meets with journalists, arranges meetings between journalists and other officials in their bureau, and, probably most time consuming, is the focal point in each bureau's

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preparation of the day's "guidance" for noon press briefings.[13] One PAA described his job to me this way:

> If I had to describe the most important function it really hasn't got much to do with the public affairs advisory function as it does with being the person responsible for balancing, on the one hand, the American public's right to know what's going on, against the legitimate interests the executive branch has in protecting sensitive information and sources. I am the point of that fulcrum.

Occasionally, public affairs advisers do play the advisory role their title implies, and have...

> the opportunity to say "American public opinion is going to go nuts when they learn that you guys are planning X action, and therefore, isn't it at least worth considering that X action is a bad policy." Yes, I have had that function from time to time... Now certainly the most tendencious issue this Bureau deals with is ______ and that is an area in which public opinion is so polarized - in which all the players' views are so well known - that there's no need for the public affairs adviser to go up and tell [the assistant secretary] "Well gee, the voting public is not supporting [the policy]." That's not news; that's not anything that's going to turn anybody around.

Thus, for the most part, the public affairs advisers deal with the Department's outwardly-directed communications, though PAAs do on occasional serve the

[13] Each day, the PAA's office identifies questions and issues likely to be raised in that day's press briefing, solicits written "guidance" - potential responses and points to be made by the department spokesperson - from officials involved with that issue, coordinates the clearances necessary for such "guidance" to become the Department's official statement, and then briefs the assistant secretary for Public Affairs about potential issues and responses.

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function of communicating public views or concerns to officials within their bureau.

Institutional Linkage and the National Security Council Staff

In the early years of the Reagan administration, the politicization of many of the National Security Council staff's activities (which would eventually culminate in the Iran/Contra debacle) was mirrored in the NSC's approach to public opinion. As a former member of the NSC's public opinion apparatus has written, "The confidence in polls in the Reagan electoral campaigns carried over into his administration's foreign policy making procedures" (Hinckley, 1988:23-4). Thus, the NSC came to include at least one public opinion analyst on its staff and included a coordinative group to brief NSC staffers on foreign and domestic public opinion, and to direct research efforts on public opinion in support of the policy interests of the administration (Hinckley, 1988). Moreover, according to one former NSC staffer, there was a keen interest in public opinion poll data from both the news media and from State Department (OAP) memos on public opinion. Further interest in public opinion came, of course, in the public diplomacy emphasis seen in NSDD-77 (see above), for which the White House and NSC staffs were the central coordinators.

The emphasis on the tracking of public opinion through the use of poll data reached its zenith early in Reagan's second term. In 1986 the NSC directly commissioned detailed and extensive poll data from a private Washington-based organization in order to determine the likelihood of achieving public support for various foreign and military policy options (Anderson and Van Atta, 1988a & 1988b). According to Ronald Hinckley, the data from these polls were important in killing the idea of military strikes in Central America,

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while lending support to the raid on Libya in April 1986 (Hinckley, 1988; Anderson and Van Atta, 1988a).[14] NSC officials interviewed for this research downplayed the significance of the data from such polls, however. The two following excerpts come from officials who were on the NSC staff at that time.

> For a while we were hooked in with some polling... early on, about '85 or '86... I came in on the tail end of it. I'm not sure we ever did anything with it. It just kind of formed a part of the background. I don't remember a decision being influenced by it, but it formed part of the background.

> I'm not convinced that any of the polling that was previously done, either for the White House or for the NSC, was a key source of information on which to base a decision... I can't see, nor can I conceive, of a situation in which polling is seen as being a key.

Whatever its effect or importance, at the end of 1986, the NSC polling operation was halted.

The reason for the cessation of NSC commissioned polls is not entirely clear. One NSC staffer interviewed indicated his opinion that it was due to the clarification of NSC responsibilities after Iran/Contra.

> I suspect that the reason to terminate it was because the NSC is involved in the coordination of policy, not in polling. Its probably as simple as that. Taking polls now is not necessarily central to the operation of the NSC.

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[14] Circumstantial evidence indicates that Hinckley, a former staff member of the NSC's Crisis Management Center (which reportedly commissioned the polls) from 1983 to 1985, was a major figure in the actual polling operation. Circumstances also point toward the National Security Information Center, where Hinckley was a senior fellow in 1986, as the organization which actually conducted the polls.

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Thus, the general depoliticization of the NSC staff after 1986 may have ended the polling operation. It is also conceivable that, given the Congressional ire which resulted from the revelation of State's polling operation in the 1950s, that NSC polling was stopped in order to avoid further political scandal and Congressional friction after the Iran/Contra scandal came to light. Whatever the reason, the NSC stopped commissioning public opinion polls in the fall of 1986 and carried none out at least until the end of the Reagan administration in January 1989.

As of January, 1989, there were no institutional mechanisms whatsoever for the assessment and reporting of public opinion information at NSC. Not even the Wirthlin Group poll data were circulated within the NSC. As one staffer told me,

> Wirthlin works for the President directly, and his contract is paid for by the Republican Party, so the National Security Adviser is not following [those] public opinion polls.

Such is not to say that no one on the NSC staff ever sees poll data. They, as with most foreign policy officials, religiously follow the major news media, but in an ad hoc and individual fashion. The closest thing to an institutional mechanism for the assessment of public opinion which existed in the NSC staff of 1988-9 was staff meetings. One respondent, when asked if he knew of any formal NSC mechanisms for tracking public opinion responded,

> The morning staff meeting at 7:30. We're all reading the same over-night reports in the papers and broadcast media on foreign policy events and how they've played. And then we also have the benefit of Marlin

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Fitzwater's[15] people who tell us what questions are being asked by the press.

In short, the NSC staff of the final two years of the Reagan administration had no formal institutional mechanism for the assessment or analysis of public opinion. NSC staffers interviewed did not even receive State's public opinion memos. In the first six years of the Reagan administration, there was an institutional linkage system, though its methods and purposes (in the form of polling) were of questionable utility (not to mention legality). After 1986, however, all institutional mechanisms of linkage between public opinion and the NSC staff were eliminated, leaving NSC staffers to keep abreast of public opinion by their own means.

Conclusions on Institutional Linkage

The majority of the energy devoted to communicating with the public by American foreign policy institutions is outwardly directed. For the most part, this outwardly directed communication occurs via the news media. There is a definite emphasis upon explaining and justifying policy decisions to the public. To some extent there is also an inclination toward manipulation of the public, as exemplified in the Office of Public Diplomacy, but such efforts are largely moderated by the professional conservatism of the career Foreign Service.

While this research has made no effort to assess the impact which such communications have had upon the public itself, it has looked carefully at the input linkage function - communications from the public directed toward

[15] The White House press spokesman.

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foreign policy institutions. The input-linkage institutions which are in place in the State Department are weak, and no such institutions even exist at the National Security Council. As one State official put it, "If one tries to take into account the public's views, it seems to me that we don't have a very good mechanism for recording what the public view is." Another official, discussing ways in which he takes public opinion into account, confirmed this notion:

> To some extent we rely on our own judgement. Its not something that we regularly go to the public affairs bureau to consult on. Its more relying on information we receive from other sources.

The poll and other public opinion data generated by the Office of Opinion Analysis and Plans fall largely on indifferent ears. A political appointee at State, and veteran of over a decade there, characterized this as...

> Very unfortunate - its interesting. Some of the people who do the polling are very professional and some of the commentary on editorial opinion and other things - some of them are very serious career analysts and bureaucrats who take their work very seriously, and who of course know perfectly well that nobody pays any attention to them, and therefore they become very embittered and unhappy and it adds to this very difficult environment where it is very difficult to communicate or get anything done.

Some of the institutional linkage mechanisms do work, however. The speaker feedback program, for instance, gets largely positive reviews. However, such feedback is rare and occurs only on issues about which the public has requested information. There is thus a largely ad hoc nature to the generation and use of such information by particular officials.

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All in all, the institutional mechanisms of linkage in the foreign policy process are very weak. Such is not to say, however, that this precludes effective communication between the public and foreign policy officials. Less formal or institutionalized paths are available to officials who wish to use them. However, such paths are far from routinized. Different officials may perceive the public differently, they may look to widely varying sources for public opinion information, and they may place drastically different emphases upon the information they acquire about public opinion. Thus, the nature and means of linkage are left largely to the personal preferences and routines of individual officials. It is these ad hoc, personal, and non-routinized linkages which will be examined in the chapter which follows.

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Chapter 5. How Do Foreign Policy Officials See Public Opinion?

To this point in the discussion, public opinion has been used as a term largely without need of definition. Intuitively, we often have a "feel" for the term "public opinion" as meaning popular attitudes on significant political issues. V.O. Key gave us a somewhat more precise, and for this study relevant, definition of public opinion as "those opinions held by private persons which governments find it prudent to heed" (Key 1961:14). Conceptually, such a definition is fine, but operationally, it leaves much to be desired; Which private citizens?, In which cases?, For which governments or segments of government?

In his work on public opinion and foreign policy, Cohen (1973) made an attempt to move beyond a conceptual definition of public opinion, to an operational view of public opinion from the viewpoint of government actors. "I am concerned", Cohen wrote, "not to discover how officials perceive and react to what I may think of as public opinion, but to discover what aspects of the external environment come into their consciousness as politically relevant factors" (Cohen 1973:27). Melvin Small (1988) has recently written of public opinion as perceived in the White House during the years of the Vietnam War as a mixture of polls, mail, news media, Congress, and friends (Small, 1988:14-15). This chapter will describe a similarly rich mixture of public opinion types among contemporary foreign policy officials.

This chapter addresses the question of what specific segments of the "external environment" foreign policy officials see when they think of, or try to assess, public opinion. How, in other words, do foreign policy officials translate diverse and often noisy sources of external opinion into a set of viewpoints which can be called "public" opinion?

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This chapter also sets out to find patterns of operational definitions - Which operationalizations of public opinion tend to be associated with others? Which individuals are most likely to define public opinion in specific ways? The answers to these questions suggest profound implications - Given that public opinion can speak with many voices, are some voices louder than others? Might foreign policy bureaucrats, who have traditionally been considered unresponsive to public opinion, actually be highly responsive to public opinion as they, not necessarily we as outside observers, see it?

Operationalizing Public Opinion

Prior to starting this research, I had taken the concept of "public opinion" as a given. As a political scientist, I thought I understood what the term meant. Public opinion was mass opinion - the feelings and attitudes of the broader citizenry of the nation - and was most often expressed in elections and public opinion polls. During preliminary interviews for this project, however, it quickly became apparent that such a definition, while self-evident to me, was often not the understanding of public opinion which my subjects had. As a result, an important topic in all interviews from which the general sample data for this dissertation were derived, was how each of the respondents defined public opinion in operational terms. Conceptually, public opinion is relatively easy to define. Operationally, for the foreign policy official, public opinion has many meanings.

In asking how they saw public opinion, the respondents listed a wide variety of operationalizations. Moreover, most individuals gave a list of operational definitions, many with very separate and distinct items included. In short, responses to this operationalization question yielded a greater

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variety and complexity of responses than any other topic discussed in the interviews. In order to simplify the following discussion of these definitions and to help to identify patterns, five categories of operationalized public opinion have been identified. These categories are based upon multiple responses to open ended questions which have been coded, correlated, and factor analyzed to identify relationships and patterns. Some individuals volunteered single operational definitions. Some respondents listed more than one operationalization, but each was of a similar nature and thus fitted into one category. Most, however, gave quite varied definitions, and thus have responses coded in two or more categories. The frequencies and patterns of responses within and between these categories are discussed below following the definition and discussion of each.

Frequencies of operationalizations. The frequency of operational categories of public opinion used by respondents, as well as the frequency of more specific operationalizations within categories, is summarized in Table 5-1 (following page). (Explanations and definitions of each category appear in the sections which follow.) The large numbers of responses in five of these six categories gives a preliminary indication of the variety of operationalizations which many individuals used. Though elected officials, and in particular the Congress, was the most frequent response, the news media and interest groups are also clearly important operational definitions of public opinion. One interesting result seen in this table is the relatively small number of responses (fifteen of sixty eight) citing polls as valid operationalizations of public opinion. Though the overall number of respondents who cited some form of unmediated public opinion is sizeable, a great deal of skepticism about

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Table 5-1: Number of Respondents Mentioning Categories and Specific Operationalizations of Public Opinion

Category	Number	Category	Number
Elected Officials	31	Interested Public/Interest Groups	19
(Congress	29)		
(National/Presidential Elections	5)	Elite Opinion Sources	8
		(News Media, Editorials	3)
		(Friends/Acquaintances	2)
News Media, News Items	30	(Other Govt Officials	1)
		(Academics/Experts	3)
Unmediated Public Opinion	24	Conceptual Non-Operationalizations	21*
(Public Opinion Polls	15)	(Elites	9)
(Letters & Phone Calls	11)	(Mass Public	12)
(Speaker Feedback	5)	(Expressed Opinion	3)

n = 68
* - Responses within this category are treated as missing data; see text sections below.
NOTE: General categories and the numbers of individuals citing at least one definition of public opinion within that category appear underlined. Figures in parentheses below categories represent specific responses and frequencies of component items.
Data were derived from an open-ended interview question asking respondents how they operationalize public opinion. Up to three responses were coded per interview. Thus, total responses exceed sample size. Individuals citing more than one component item within a single category, are coded as one response citing that operationalization category. Thus, the number of component item responses within categories may exceed total number of respondents listed as having used that category.

polls will be seen in several excerpts below. Finally, the small number of operationalizations falling within the elite sources category shows that the specific responses which comprise it are both somewhat idiosyncratic and of minor importance, especially given the fact that, as will be seen below, no respondent fell within this category without also citing alternative operationalizations from other categories.

Public opinion as elected officials. The largest group of operationalizations (31 of 68) fall into a category which defines public opinion in terms of the political positions of elected officials and the outcomes of national elections. Elections and their outcomes are seen to be legitimate expressions of public

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preferences on broad policy matters. The officials who hold office as a result of such expressions are thus seen as representatives of the public on the more narrow issues which foreign policy officials must address. Thus, public opinion on specific foreign policy questions is seen to be both mediated through and manifested by popularly elected officials. To some extent, this operationalization can refer to the President, but for most of those who use this type of definition, the Congress is seen as a major operationalization of public attitudes.

There are varying reasons given for the use of Congress as an operationalization of public opinion. One, as implied above, is that Congress provides a measure of opinion on specific issues; public opinion can be directly measured on general issues, but Congress can serve as a more specific guide to policy. The following excerpt not only serves as an example of why Congress is operationalized as public opinion, but also (as do many of the other excerpts which will follow) demonstrates the variety and complexity of operationalizations which individuals expressed.

> I don't think as policy makers we have to sit down and say, "Well how will public opinion react to this." Its much more specific... What will Congress think of this, or this particular Congressman, or this particular news organization. But as to what the American public thinks as a whole? No, you just can't....

Similarly, some express the need to operationalize public opinion via the Congress in terms of the clarity of views articulated.

> Public opinion primarily is the collective views of verbal influence in American at large, and it boils down to - in addition to editors and journalists - Congressmen who decide an issue is important to them.

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Congress is also seen as a more directly relevant form of public opinion for foreign policy officials. Public opinion does not have a direct impact upon their ability to act. Public opinion only becomes operationally relevant when it is manifested in concrete actions which affect them. The operational constraints imposed by Congress are also often seen as surrogates for public opinion on issues which do not display high political salience, where the public is likely to neither know about nor have an opinion about that issue.

Finally, Congressional opinion, even on highly salient issues, is often seen as a surrogate for mass opinion as measured in polls. As was noted in Chapter Four, many officials express a distrust of polls as expressions of public opinion. Thus, Congress is seen as a more legitimate measure of the public's attitudes.

> I don't recall dealing on an issue, sitting around a table and saying, "Woops, we've got a Gallup poll here that's running against us eight to one; let's not do this." It's more intuitive. It's important but I've never seen it swing an issue one way or another. It's a factor, and I see those polls, and frankly I pay some attention to it, but I figure that when we're hearing from the Hill, we're hearing the popular mood.

For all of the above reasons, then, elected officials in general, and the Congress in particular, are seen as a major operational form of public opinion.

News media reporting. For many of the officials interviewed (29 of 68), the news media both represent and reflect the public mood on political issues. Public opinion is reflected in the tone of some coverage, and stories which cast an issue as controversial are seen to reflect a sense of priority within the larger body-politic. The media are also seen as informed representatives of the public in the sense that reporters both know the issues and have an

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"outside" perspective upon them. They are recognized as only a limited sector of the public itself, but are nevertheless seen as a major manifestation of public opinion. This operationalization of public opinion does not, however, include the editorial opinions of news organizations. Most (though not all, as will be seen below) officials I interviewed discounted the importance of editorial positions. To the extent that such positions were seen to bias reportage, they were almost universally deplored. Even straight-forward editorials were seen more as reflections of very specific and unrepresentative elite opinions.

For some officials, the press represents a source of articulated opinion on specific issues. Whereas mass opinion is either ill-informed about an issue or fails to present a clear message on specific issues, to many, the press represents both an informed and articulate segment of public opinion. The following excerpt from an officer working on the desk of a small Asian country demonstrates this.

> In some ways, unless you're talking about a very big issue, there is no such thing as public opinion. Public opinion for me is journalists I know and respect, or certain newspapers. So public opinion in the mass doesn't mean that much. Its got to be broken down into something that's much more specific.

Skepticism about public opinion polls also affects this category of operationalization. Though many officials cite polls as representing public opinion tend to know of such polls by following the news media, many of those who distrust polls use the flavor of media coverage as a guide to broader public opinion. One such official stated that the news media are,

> ... What public opinion means to me. Its not an Iowa corn farmer's response to a poll. Its the *Washington Post* or other news media.

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Another official cited skepticism toward polls as his reason for emphasizing the media as an operationalization of public opinion.

> In many cases its what I see in the newspaper or what I see on TV. In other words, I don't have the time to go out and conduct public opinion surveys. In general, I'm a little skeptical of public opinion surveys that I don't read in depth and don't understand what kind of sample has been taken.

Interested public/interest groups. As with the operationalizations described above, mass public opinion is often seen to provide only very general guidance on policy matters. On very specific issues, many officials are unable to see or discern any mass public opinion. They thus come to see public opinion as the opinions of specific segments of the public which are either highly interested in or directly affected by decisions in a given area. As seen in Table 5-1 above, 19 of 68 respondents cited interest groups as an operationalized form of pubic opinion.

Operationalizing public opinion in terms of such interested groups means that consideration of public attitudes on very narrow issues can be accomplished. The following statement by an officer in the Near East & South Asian bureau of State is a good example of this kind of operationalization.

> The public opinion which is going to take a position on which variant of the Maverick missile should be sent to Kuwait, or which enhancement of the F-15 should be allowed for Saudi Arabia, is going to be highly informed and politicized, but narrowly based. It's going to be AIPAC[1] or a few folks at McDonnell-Douglas. It's not going to be the man in the street.

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[1] America/Israel Public Affairs Committee.

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There are many officials in the foreign policy process who maintain very close contact with interested public groups, whether defined as business associations, narrow political action committees, or cohesive ethnic groups. Not all such officials conceptualize such groups as representative of public opinion, however. For many, these groups represent their own narrow interests, rather than the broader interests and concerns of the American body-politic. Yet, on many issues, especially non-salient ones, interest groups are the only "public" which officials can see. As a result, many officials come to express operationalizations of public opinion which include interest groups, yet simultaneously express misgivings and reservations about doing so. The following African Affairs bureau official is one such example.

> The people speak with many voices. Part of the problem is that there are a lot of individual pressure groups speaking for the American public, many of whom represent only themselves; their views are not widely shared by the American public, and you end up with one of these agonizing questions of, "Yeah, but does that mean that the major part of the American people either are ignorant and don't want to know or are ignorant and should know? Do the silent support the five percent who are speaking out? Does the silent majority support the status quo, or does the very fact that is does not stand up for the status quo in effect give its support to the five percent? One has to take into account public opinion, but it can be very difficult to measure public opinion.

The question of whether or not interest groups are legitimate representatives of public opinion is also expressed in the following excerpt from an interview with a senior deputy assistant secretary.

> You try to define public opinion in a couple of ways. One, public opinion is whatever I say it is - in other words, if I want to let you know what

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> public opinion is, my group will get a lot of folks to send letters to you, and that will be public opinion. That's part of it - the active part of the public is public opinion and the passive part of it is not. But you have to know the degrees. The media is part of public opinion. Certainly pressure groups are legitimately part of public opinion, but the passive sector is part of it too. In other words, its a very noisy one percent. Most people are not going to get involved; they're more involved in their own lives. Again, its unfair to the majority who don't make their views known, but you tend to look at who's noisy.

As a result of such misgivings, officials often feel as if they must attempt to strike a balance between the views of interest groups and the broader "public interest".

Most of the foreign policy officials interviewed indicated that they were aware of, and considered the opinions of, relevant interest groups to be important in making decisions. However, only a limited number equated such groups with public opinion. For most, such groups formed a distinct category of domestic political opinion. Nevertheless, slightly under one-third (19 of 68) of the sample operationalized public opinion (at least in part) as the opinion of interest groups, even though many expressed mixed feelings about doing so.

Unmediated forms of public opinion. I have used the term "unmediated" in designating this category to indicate operationalizations which are more or less direct expressions of public attitudes to policy makers, or responses by members of the mass public to inquiries about policy issues (mainly through public opinion polling). This category thus contains a few obvious operationalizations. One of these is letters or phone calls directly from the public to the State Department or other government agencies. A less obvious

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unmediated operationalization is the speaker feedback mechanism (described in Chapter Four) and other direct forms of dialogue with members of the public. Finally, this category includes public opinion poll results as expressions of public opinion. Though in the strictest sense, the public attitudes reported in such polls are mediated by the choice of questions and the format in which results are reported, such results are relatively unmediated when compared to such operationalizations as interest groups, Congress, or the news media. Many individuals grouped these unmediated forms of public opinion together, and in analyzing and grouping their responses, I have done so here as well. In total, twenty four of those interviewed cited at least one form of unmediated public opinion as potentially representative of public opinion as a whole.

Though they are few in number, there are some officials who see direct contact of the government by citizens as a valid and useful operationalization of public opinion. The following example from an interview with an NSC staffer, is an example of unmediated opinion.

> I define public opinion as any group of Americans who feel strongly enough about an issue to voice their opinion, either by sending their letters to the White House or Congress. I generally assume that on most issues there is not public opinion. There are certain lobbying groups, but public opinion is expressed rarely, so when it is expressed, we like to take account of it.

Another unmediated form of opinion is interactions which officials have with interested citizens around the United States, whether on speaking tours or during personal travel. The reader may recall, for instance, the official who discovered the public's discontent with policy toward Panama while on a scuba diving trip in Florida (Chapter Three). The following

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statement similarly emphasizes the importance of more formal, but also direct, contact.

> The best way to get it is to get out of this town and to get on an airplane and get out to Iowa or some place like that and do some public speaking, and say, "Look, I can spend an hour telling you what's on my mind, but what are you folks thinking about?" I've done that a few times... tremendously valuable!

Finally, a broader example of such unmediated opinion was given by an official in the East Asian & Pacific affairs bureau:

> Public opinion for me is what your average citizen or their representatives articulate, and they articulate that in individual one-on-one sessions; or letters to the editor. They articulate in direct letters to the Department. They articulate it in terms of their participation in radio or TV talk shows. Its a rather broad concept, but I think everyone's aware of what it means.

On the topic of public opinion polls as operationalizations of public opinion, more officials specifically indicated that they thought polls were not useful or valid operationalizations of public opinion than thought that they were useful for any purpose. Several such examples have been presented in previous sections, therefore only one more will be presented here, this time from a Soviet affairs specialist.

> They're important and you follow them, but its just sort of a watching brief for changes; what issues are important. Its something that you watch for trends in a fairly relaxed way, but they don't have any operational currency for us.

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Even some of those who indicated that polls are a useful operationalization to them, often qualified their statements, as did the following deputy assistant secretary.

> Polls are sometimes very relevant, sometimes not so relevant, simply because they're not timely or the questions asked are often sloppy or don't address the actual policy issues facing the administration. And they tend to take attention away from the difficult choices and tend to be black and white kind of questions. They're not real-world kind of grey questions. But by and large, polls do have an impact; they have a very noticeable impact.

Because of the many problems which policy makers see in public opinion polls results, whether derived from press reports or internal memoranda (see Chapter Four), virtually no one operationalized public opinion solely in terms of poll results. The majority of those who did cite them, did so in conjunction with other forms of opinion; sometimes other forms of unmediated opinion, sometimes not. (The deputy assistant secretary quoted directly above, for example, also cited Congress and the news media as operationalizations of public opinion.) When taken together, however, polls and other forms of unmediated public opinion represent public opinion for over one-third of those interviewed.

Elite opinion sources. A very small number of respondents (only eight in the sample of sixty eight) defined operationalizations of public opinion which used sources which can most easily be thought of as elite sources. News media editorials, for instance, fall into this group, as they were thought to represent the public opinion of "influence." Informal discussions with friends, colleagues, and professional acquaintances were also occasionally considered

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to represent a form of public opinion. The opinions of experts (academic or otherwise) were also mentioned by a few officials as equivalent to public opinion. As was the case with interest groups (above), though many officials cited such experts as important external sources of input, only three respondents specifically equated them with public opinion.

Thus, this category is very much a residual one. The manner in which these operationalizations were mentioned by respondents also indicate a residual category, as no one of the six who used it did so exclusively; all used it in conjunction with some other form or forms of public opinion. Individuals who mentioned elite sources as operationalizations of public opinion tended to value informed and articulate opinion more than mass-based types of opinion. Though many officials indicated that they valued such elite sources, only these few equated them with public opinion.

Conceptual non-operationalizations. Finally, a number of operationalizations described by interview subjects were either vague or strictly conceptual. The three broad types of definition which I have labelled conceptual are mentions of "mass" opinion, "elite" opinion, and "expressed" opinion. For some officials such operationalizations were along the lines of "thinking out loud" about the concept of representing public opinion, before being able to articulate more specific sources; having come up with a conceptual or general notion of how they operationalize public opinion, they were then able to move on to specifics.

For some other officials, however, answers to the operationalization question remained either vague or conceptual, perhaps because they simply did not understand the question; more likely they simply had never explicitly

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thought about the concept before and could not readily articulate a response.[2] Other responses which might fall into this conceptual operationalization category included mentions of "informed opinion", "articulate opinion", "the opinion that people express to us", or what the "average American thinks."

All responses along these lines, as conceptual rather than operational definitions, are treated below as missing data. This eliminates only three officials (of the total sixty eight interviewed) from further analysis of the operationalization variable.

Complexity and Patterns of Operationalization

As stated above, most respondents operationalized public opinion in multiple ways. Most were able to grasp both the conceptual aspects of the question and had a complex understanding of it. For many, the operational definition of public opinion was clearly an idea that they had pondered before. On the whole, the variety of operationalizations expressed, as well as the complexity of many individual responses, makes patterns among them difficult to specify. By compressing several specific responses into operationalization categories, this task is made somewhat simpler, though reference to specific operationalizations will be made when appropriate. The variety and complexity of categorized responses can be seen in the listing (Table 5-2, following page) of combinations of categories mentioned by the sixty eight respondents in the sample.

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[2] It was apparent that more of the younger and less experienced officers had trouble with this question than their more senior colleagues.

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Table 5-2: Combinations of Operationalization Categories Mentioned by Respondents

Number of Respondents with Operationalizations in One Category Only (Total of 22)

Category	Number	Category	Number
Elected Officials Only	7	News Media Only	3
Interest Groups Only	5	Unmediated Public Opinion Only	4
Elite Opinion Sources Only	0	Conceptual Operationalizations Only	3

Number of Respondents with Operationalizations in Two Categories (Total of 27)

Categories	Number	Categories	Number
Elected Offs & News Media	5	News Media & Interest Groups	1
Elected Offs & Unmediated Op	3	News Media & Conceptual	3
Elected Offs & Interest Groups	2	Unmediated Op & Interest Groups	1
Elected Offs & Conceptual	1	Unmediated Op & Conceptual	2
News Media & Unmediated Op	6	Interest Groups & Conceptual	3

Number of Respondents with Operationalizations in Three Categories (Total of 19)

Categories	Number
Elected Officials & Media & Unmediated Opinion	4
Elected Officials & Media & Interest Groups	3
Elected Officials & Media & Elite Sources	1
Elected Officials & Media & Conceptual	2
Elected Officials & Interest Groups & Elite Sources	1
Elected Officials & Elite Sources & Conceptual	1
Elected Officials & Conceptual & Interest Groups	1
Media & Interest Groups & Conceptual	1
Media & Elite Sources & Conceptual	2
Unmediated Opinion & Interest Groups & Elite Sources	1
Unmediated Opinion & Elite Sources & Conceptual	2

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The complex combinations of responses which many respondents expressed are illustrated as well in the following interview excerpts, both of which are rather typical in their multifaceted operationalizations.

As a general rule, it basically works out in three areas: Impact on Congress, impact on the media, and impact on special interest groups. These are the ways that public opinion can exercise an impact on the government, and so these are the areas we have to pay attention to. The rest of public opinion is too amorphous. Its a little like the difference between a textile plant in North Carolina that has a specific interest in protecting its jobs, and the consumer interest which has an interest in buying shirts cheaper. The consumers aren't organized, whereas the factories are. So there may be amorphous foreign policy attitudes out there in the country as a whole, although by and large they're not that important because in the country as a whole, foreign policy issues are of second importance to bread and butter issues and more local issues. But if they exist, they have to have some means of bringing their influence to bear.

Its partly based on the kind of public affairs work that we do - we go out and give talks to local groups and see what's on their minds. Its partly a reflection of opinions which may be brought to us because people who know something or have heard something about an issue and they want to express their opinions so they write to us or come to us. It may be partly just through the media. Not necessarily polls - there aren't polls on very many trade issues. It can be expressed in the form of Congressional resolutions. I suppose that would be public opinion as well; you could say that Congress is reflecting the views of their constituents.

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Though these excerpts and Table 5-2 illustrate complexity well, few patterns are immediately obvious because of that complexity. Examining the associations among the varying categories of operationalization (Table 5-3, below), however, sheds some light upon some of the relationships among the different operationalizations.

Table 5-3: Association (Tau_c) Matrix of Operationalization Categories for Individual Responses

	Elected Officials	News Media	Interest Groups	Unmediated Opinion	Elite Sources
Elected Officials	1.000				
News Media	.019 (.874)	1.000			
Interest Groups	-.098 (.371)	-.199 (.068)	1.000		
Unmediated Op	-.173 (.137)	-.035 (.765)	-.277 (.006)	1.000	
Elite Sources	-.038 (.627)	-.031 (.690)	-.013 (.845)	.010 (.890)	1.000

n= 68.
Unparenthesized entries are Tau_c coefficients. Entries in parentheses are two-tailed chi^2 significance levels.

Firstly, it should be noted that these categories do tend to be rather distinct. That is, there are no categories which correlate both positively and significantly with any other category; all significant correlations show inverse relationships.[3] Thus, while there are no operationalization categories which tend to be used in tandem in any systematic manner, there are some types which tend to be used exclusive of certain others.

[3] It should be recalled that the operationalization variables involve responses to an open-ended question allowing for multiple responses and combinations of responses from each individual. Thus, the relationships seen are not measurement artifacts.

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Patterns of operationalization: Interest groups. Perhaps the most distinct operationalization category is that which sees interested publics as the operational equivalent of public opinion. For the most part, the officials who cite this form of opinion tend not to cite either the news media or unmediated public opinion as alternative operationalizations. These inverse relationships are seen graphically in Table 5-4, below.

Table 5-4: Use of Interested Public Operationalization, by Elected Official, News Media, and Unmediated Opinion Operationalizations

	Respondents Using Interested Public as Operationalization		
Respondents	Yes	No	Total
Used Operationalizations...			
News Media (t_c = -.199)			
Yes	5	25	30
No	14	24	38
Total	19	49	68
Unmediated Opinion (t_c = -.277)			
Yes	2	22	24
No	17	27	44
Total	19	49	68

The different strengths of these relationships also highlight patterns in the use of the interested public as operationalized public opinion. The news media were somewhat unlikely to be included with interest groups as alternative operationalizations. Clearly, however, there is a strong tendency for officials who see interest groups as the operationally relevant public to avoid unmediated forms of public opinion, especially public opinion polls. Interestingly, this has nothing to do with the salience of the issues upon which these officials work[4], as one might expect given the differences in the availability and reliability of polls on non-salient issues. There is, however, a

[4] The association between use in interest groups as an operationalization and the issue salience of respondents is t_b = -.017, p = .891.

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relationship between the <u>types</u> of issues which individuals deal with and their use of this operationalization. There is, for example, a very strong relationship among those for whom economic issues are a primary concern (tau_c = .254, p = .000). This relationship is also seen, though less clearly, with regard to those who deal with countries in economic competition with the United States (such as Japan), and those who work on issues involving vocal ethnic groups (such as Jews, Cubans, and Greeks). Thus, for most of the officials in this category, the interest of specific economic, ethnic, or other vocal interest groups tends to result in the discounting of the importance of unmediated, or more mass-based, public opinion.

There is also something of a generational factor involved with the use of interest groups as operationalizations of public opinion, with more senior respondents showing a greater likelihood to cite interested publics as operational equivalents of public opinion. This association, though weak, is seen both in age (t_b = .209, p = .109) and in experience in government (t_b = .171, p = .124). Two explanations of this relationship seem plausible. One is that, as officials spend more time in the government, they develop networks and relationships with interested groups and segments of the public, which become operational equivalents of the public-at-large. Younger officials, on the other hand, who have not yet had the chance to build such personal networks, cite other operationalizations. One might also speculate, however, that generational differences in the way the public is viewed might also be at work here, with younger officials seeing public opinion more in terms of unmediated opinion than in terms of interest groups.

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Patterns of operationalization: Elected officials. Though the citation of elected representatives as operational equivalents of public opinion was fairly widespread among interview respondents (31 of 68), a few patterns can be seen. Not surprisingly, given the results of the latter portion of Chapter Three, there are negative relationships between this type of operationalization and respondents who are political appointees (t_c = -.258, p = .008), Republican identifiers (t_b = -.177, p = .062), and conservative leaners (t_b = -.212, p = .099). As was discussed at greater length in Chapter Three, those who were more likely to identify with the ideology or political fortunes of the incumbent administration, tended not to equate public opinion with the Congress which had been so troublesome to the Reagan administration on a number of foreign policy issues. There was also, on the other hand, a tendency for Foreign Service Officers to identify elected officials, again, Congress in particular, with public opinion (t_c = .204, p = .044).

Patterns of operationalization: News media. In looking at those who operationalize public opinion in terms of the news media, the pattern of partisanship is again evident, with not a single Republican identifier listing the media as the operational equivalent of public opinion, as seen in Table 5-5 (following page). It appears as if strong administration identifiers not only tend to discount the representativeness of Congress when operationalizing public, but also tend to see the news media as unrepresentative of public sentiments. Indeed, during interviews with Republican identifiers, many made reference to liberal biases in many major newspapers. Based upon this perception of bias in the news media it may be speculated that this tendency not to operationalize public opinion in terms of the news media is a long-term

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Table 5-5: Respondents Using News Media as Operationalization, by Party ID

	Respondent Cites News Media as Operationalization of Public Opinion?		
	No	Yes	Total
Party Self-ID			
Strong Democrat	1	1	2
Weak Democrat	4	6	10
Independent, Leaning Democratic	9	9	15
Independent	6	8	14
Independent, Leaning Republican	6	3	9
Weak Republican	5	0	5
Strong Republican	5	0	5
Total	36	27	63

$t_b = -.283$, $p = .006$.

phenomenon of Republican identification, rather than identification with an incumbent administration.

A negative association exists between those who work on economic issues and operationalization of public opinion as the news media ($t_c = -.156$, $p = .024$). This is consistent with the previous finding that those who see public opinion in terms of interest groups (many of whom work on economic issues) tend not to combine the news media and interest groups in their listing of public opinion operationalizations. Officials who work within the geographic bureaus of the State Department, traditionally the most influential and prestigious bureaus, tend, however to be more likely to operationalize public opinion in terms of the news media, as Table 5-6 (below) shows.

Table 5-6: News Media Operationalization, by State Dept. Geographic Bureaus

	Respondent Cites News Media as Operationalization of Public Opinion?		
	Yes	No	Total
State Geographic Bureaus	23	17	40
All other State Bureaus	5	17	22
Total	28	34	62

t_c - .315, $p = .008$.

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<u>Patterns of operationalization: Unmediated public opinion</u>. As noted above, there is a strong tendency for those who cite interest groups as equivalent to public opinion not to cite unmediated opinion sources as operationalizations of public opinion (t_c = -.277, p = .008). It seems as if officials who prefer unmediated, or more direct, expressions of public opinion tend to avoid interest groups' opinion in operationalizing public opinion.

The factors which predict which individuals will operationalize public opinion using unmediated opinion are largely different from those which determine other categories of operationalization. Partisanship, career tracks, and the agency one works in do not seem to have an effect here. Rather, the factors which increase the likelihood that public opinion will be operationalized through unmediated opinion sources are issue-based. Not surprisingly, issue salience is important (t_b = .208, p = .069). Those who work on highly salient issues not only can assume a higher degree of knowledge among the public on their issues, but will also see more unmediated expressions of public opinion (such as polls results or letters from citizens) than those who work on obscure or little known issues.

<u>Patterns of operationalization: Elite sources</u>. Though the grouping of operationalizations using elite opinion sources is a small residual category (only six respondents used such definitions) and generalizations about such a small group must remain tentative (due to the difficulty of finding statistically significant relationships), a few comments can be made based upon the available data. State Department "Seventh Floor" officials seem significantly more likely than other individuals to cite elite (editorials, friends, colleagues, and experts) opinions as operational equivalents of public opinion (tc = .143,

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p = .005).[5] It would thus seem that, as one gets closer the highest decision makers, there is a greater tendency to look toward elite opinions for public input. Two qualifications of this finding need to be made, however. First, NSC officials (who also are quite close to high decision makers) do not demonstrate the same tendency to favor elite opinions. Moreover, it is difficult to know if this "Seventh Floor" disposition is a systematic phenomenon, or is merely an artifact of the preferences of the highest officials in office at the time of these interviews, especially given the small total (seven) of respondents who fit into the "Seventh Floor" category

One other relationship worth mentioning here is an interesting association with Sophistication Index scores (how respondent's rate the public's foreign policy sophistication), as seen Table 5-7 (below).

Table 5-7: Elite Source Operationalization, by Sophistication Index Scores

	Respondent Cites Elite Sources as Operationalizations of Public Opinion?		
	No	Yes	Total
Sophistication Score			
1.0 to 1.6	9	1	10
1.7 to 2.2	16	1	17
2.3 to 2.8	19	3	22
2.9 to 3.4	8	2	10
3.5 to 4.0	3	1	4
Total	55	8	63

t_b = .135, p = .247

Though the population of this group is small (which produces the lack of statistical significance in the above association), those who view elite sources as at least one operational component of public opinion, seem to consider the

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[5] Seventh Floor officials are coded as assistant secretaries or higher, and officials on the staffs of the Department Secretary and Undersecretaries.

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public (as they see it) as sophisticated, at least relative to those who do not operationalize public opinion in this way. However, because it is not statistically significant, this finding must remain highly tentative.

Summary of operationalization patterns. Table 5-8 (following page) provides a useful graphic summary of the relationships described above:

Table 5-8: Summary of Significant Relationships between Use of Operationalizations for Public Opinion and Respondent Characteristics

	Interest Groups	Elected Officials	News Media	Unmediated Opinion	Elite Opinion
Party ID*	.	-	-	.	.
Ideology*	.	-	.	.	.
Appointee	.	-	.	.	.
FSO	.	+	.	.	.
Age	+	.	.	.	.
Salience	.	.	.	+	.
Econ Issues	+	.	-	.	.
Geog Bureau	.	.	+	.	.
"Seventh Floor"	.	.	.	.	+

. = No statistically significant relationship
- = Statistically significant ($p \leq .10$) negative relationship
+ = Statistically significant ($p \leq .10$) positive relationship
* - Positive relationship indicates greater probability respondent is (Republican/conservative).
** - Scores measuring respondents' rating of public's sophistication on foreign policy issues.

Summarizing in brief:

--- There is a tendency for more senior officials (in years) to look toward interest groups when gauging public opinion.

--- There is a tendency for officials who work on economic issues to define public opinion in terms of interest groups, to the exclusion of the news media.

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--- Foreign Service Officers are more likely than non-FSOs or political appointees to look toward the Congress to operationally represent public opinion.

--- Those who identify themselves as Republicans, and to a lesser extent conservative, are unlikely to cite Congress and the media as sources of public opinion.

--- Issue salience tends to make officials look toward unmediated sources of opinion which, in high salience issues is readily accessible.

Operationalization and Attitudes Toward the Public

If, as has been shown above, there is a great deal of variance in the way officials assess public opinion operationally, it is conceivable that such differences could affect the attitudes of officials regarding the public itself. It is thus worth investigating the possibility that differences in operationalization could clarify our picture of officials' attitudes toward both the public's sophistication and toward the appropriate level of public input (see Chapter Three). To examine this, first with regard to Sophistication Index scores, we can reconsider the regression equation previously derived (Table 5-9, following page).[6] Equation #1 is the previous "best" equation predicting Sophistication Index scores from Chapter Three, showing issue Salience and Cleavage, as well as respondent Age, to be the most important

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[6] Though the operationalization variables have been treated as ordinal level data to this point, in order to consider the effects of the operationalization variables in conjunction with the effects of other significant variables, the operationalization variables will be treated as interval level data for the purposes of this section

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Table 5-9: Regression Equations, Dependent Variable = Sophistication Index Scores

	Equation #1 Previous (Chap 3) Fully Reduced		Equation #2 Operational-ization Variables Only		Equation #3 Variables from Equations 1&2	
Age	.228 *	(.130)			.257 **	(.125)
Cleavage	-.177 *	(.043)			-.174 **	(.080)
Consensus	-.083	(.256)			-.045	(.073)
Salience	.149 *	(.081)			.060	(.085)
Operationalization						
Elected Officials			.042	(.066)	.062	(.057)
News Media			.093	(.057)	.076	(.059)
Interest Groups			.113 *	(.066)	.110	(.067)
Unmediated Sources			.127 **	(.063)	.171 ***	(.067)
Elite Sources			.102	(.092)	.124	(.099)
R^2	.133		.117		.262	
Adjusted R^2	.070		.040		.129	
Significance	.092		.201		.063	

* - Significance ≤ .10
** - Significance ≤ .05
*** - Significance ≤ .01

variables, together explaining only thirteen percent of the variance in scores. Using operationalization dummy variables alone (Equation 2 above) to predict Sophistication scores yields a stronger result, explaining sixteen percent of the variance. However, Equation 2 is not statistically significant. By combining both the previous "best" equation's variables and the operationalization variables, however, a much improved equation in terms of variance explained results (Equation #3).

After combining all variables, Salience is no longer a significant variable, while Cleavage remains and is strengthened. Age, too, is seen to be a stronger determinant in predicting favorable Sophistication ratings. The Consensus variable is still statistically insignificant.

The single significant operationalization variables is unmediated opinion, predicting higher Sophistication ratings. Those who look toward

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unmediated sources of public opinion, it would seem, view the public-at-large more favorably than those who do not utilize such sources, though the causality in this relationship is unclear. By combining these variables we double the variance in Sophistication ratings explained from 13% to 26%.

Unfortunately, all operationalization variables other than unmediated opinion prove to be statistically insignificant. This may suggest that these other operational sources of public opinion are often seen not as equivalents to public opinion, but as either representatives of, or substitutes for, a wider public's opinions. Applying the operationalization variables to previous regression equations explaining Input ratings (see Chapter Three) points toward the same conclusion, as the analysis yields no statistically significant operationalization variables (Table 5-10, below).

Table 5-10: Regression Equations, Dependent Variable = Input Index Scores

	Equation #1 Previous (Chap 3) Fully Reduced		Equation #2 Operationalization Variables Only		Equation #3 Variables from Equations 1 & 2	
Sophistication Rating	.384 ***	(.079)			.426 ***	(.052)
Cleavage	-.116 **	(.043)			-.106 **	(.045)
Salience	.122 **	(.053)			.133 **	(.059)
Ideology	.296 *	(.104)			.296 ***	(.108)
Appointee	-.179 **	(.047)			-.177 ***	(.052)
Operationalization						
Elected Officials			.061	(.042)	.009	(.040)
News Media			.058	(.043)	-.017	(.040)
Interest Groups			.071	(.050)	-.003	(.045)
Unmediated Sources			.037	(.047)	-.065	(.046)
Elite Sources			-.107	(.070)	-.057	(.062)
R^2	.453		.076		.490	
Adjusted R^2	.400		-.001		.381	
Significance	.000		.467		.000	

* - Significance ≤ .10
** - Significance ≤ .05
*** - Significance ≤ .01

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The operational source of public opinion information which an official uses, therefore, does not appear to influence the degree of public influence in foreign policy which he or she advocates.

Conclusions on Operationalization of Public Opinion

The view which foreign policy officials have of public opinion is a complex mosaic including such factors as the Congress, the news media, interest groups, direct public expressions such as letters, and public opinion polls. Moreover, officials tend to express largely individualized pictures of how to operationalize public opinion, though some patterns do emerge. Many individuals who operationally view the public in terms of one kind of public opinion, such as interest groups, seem deliberately to avoid other types of opinion, such as public opinion polls or the Congress.

While the idea that certain domestic political actors have greater input into foreign policy than others is certainly not a new one, our findings on operationalization of public opinion lead to a slightly different statement: For officials in the foreign policy process, public opinion speaks with many voices (some of which are not typically thought of as "public" opinion, such as interest groups), and certain voices are more likely to be heard by certain actors in the policy process. Organized interest groups, for instance, seem to speak more "loudly" to more senior officials; Congress (in its role of public representative) speaks loudly to Foreign Service officers, but not to political appointees. Thus public opinion should be seen not as a unidimensional factor, either in terms of how it is perceived by policy makers, or how it affects (or fails to affect) foreign policy.

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These findings further suggest the need consider the widely varying operational definitions which officials give for public opinion when examining the role of public opinion in the foreign policy process. That is, the effect of public opinion in the policy process, and the utilization of information about public opinion by officials, should be analyzed not only in general terms, but also in terms of the specific operationalizations used by them. These findings somewhat match those of Melvin Small (1988) in his analysis of the Vietnam-era's anti-war movement's effect upon American foreign policy.

> In terms of the real world, then, academic experts who write about public opinion and foreign policy are, for the most part, out of touch with the real world. Or to put it another way, presidents and their advisers deal with public opinion in an idiosyncratic, unsystematic fashion that makes a mockery of the models that pervade the scholarly literature (Small, 1984:8).

Finally, the wide range of operational definitions which foreign policy officials assign to public opinion suggests the possibility that they are, in fact, much more attentive to public opinion (as they operationally define it) than has been previously thought (e.g. Cohen, 1973). Indeed, if we define public opinion as the mass public only, then officials do seem rather inattentive and unresponsive to public opinion. If, however, we adopt the operational definitions used by foreign policy bureaucrats, the process begins to look much more permeable to public input and influence. Whether or not we accept such operational definitions of public opinion as either normatively desirable or theoretically justified, their adoption in the policy process allows foreign policy officials to feel as if they have considered public opinion in many more cases than would be otherwise possible under a more narrow

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definition, and also, thereby, allows policy makers to justify their policy decisions as having been made only after taking public opinion into account.

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Chapter 6. Foreign Policy Makers and Domestic Politics

As was suggested in Chapter Five, it is often difficult to define public opinion (as seen by foreign policy officials) without reference to other major domestic political factors. In examining the relationship between foreign policy makers and the public, it is therefore necessary to broaden our focus to examine the attitudes of foreign policy officials toward the other elements of the domestic political context which not only operationalize public opinion, but which also reflect and interact with the public's own attitudes and opinions. Thus, while we have already examined officials' attitudes toward the public at large (in Chapter Three), and have seen in what ways public opinion is operationalized within the policy process, we will now examine the attitudes which officials display toward the three most important mediators of public opinion identified by officials, namely Congress, the news media, and interest groups.

To examine this broader context of domestic politics and public opinion, this chapter will first examine the importance which officials generally place upon domestic politics as elements of their decision making. It will then move on to the manner in which officials both view and account for the opinions of the Congress, news media, and interest groups. By examining these different forms of mediated or operationalized public opinion, this chapter will enhance our understanding of the avenues by which public opinion (broadly defined) may reach policy makers.

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Officials' General Outlook on American Domestic Politics

Given the widespread set of attitudes about the need for foreign policies to be politically feasible, it is not surprising to find that officials generally consider domestic political factors to be important aspects of the foreign policy environment in which they work. When asked, for instance, to say in general terms how important domestic political factors were to them in the making of foreign policy, thirty eight (or 56%) of those interviewed stated that such factors were very or nearly always important to them. (See Table 6-1, below). Indeed, if sensitivity to political feasibility is seen as a dominant feature in officials' attitudes toward public opinion, the broader set of domestic political considerations (including especially the Congress) should achieve similar, if not higher, significance.

Table 6-1: Frequency of Responses - "In general, how important are domestic political factors..."

Response	Frequency	Percent
Never, or rarely, Important	2	3
Slightly, or occasionally, Important	10	15
Somewhat, or often, Important	18	26
Very, or nearly always, Important	38	56
	68	100

A number of explanations are given by officials as to why domestic factors are, or should be, important in foreign policy making. One explanation involves the difficulty of drawing a line between the "domestic" and "international" aspects of the issues with which many officials work. This problem was cited, for instance, by an official in the Oceans, Environment, and Science bureau at the State Department:

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> In the kind of area I work in, the boundary between foreign and domestic policy is blurred. When you deal with environmental issues, you're going to have to build a domestic consensus for foreign policy measures, and that's increasingly true in other areas as well.

Some officials cited domestic factors as forming the constraints, or boundaries, within which policy makers needed, of necessity, to operate. The following statement, for example, was made by an official involved in trade negotiations:

> Domestic politics are important in the sense that they provide the background against which we work and that they can impose constraints upon our ability to make trade policy.

Other officials see domestic factors in much more concrete terms, as did the following desk officer in the Inter-American Affairs bureau:

> Public opinion is important because it tends to keep congressional interest going, and congressional interest is more important because they're the ones who control the funding and determine how much money the Bureau will have to spend in a particular year.

Some officials, however, defined domestic politics as the starting point of foreign policy - as the arena in which foreign policy goals are first articulated. This was so for the following individual in the Near East bureau:

> Domestic politics is what defines and expresses U.S. interests. We do not arrive at some definition of U.S. interests through some abstract process of logic or through the workings of government.

In general, the attitude of most officials toward domestic politics centers around the need for political practicality. It is widely thought that foreign policy decisions need to be framed holistically - in terms of both domestic and foreign political factors. Thus, a deputy assistant secretary at State explained the need to account for such factors:

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> I do not like a narrow construction of the role of State Department officials - that they should be - quote - quite simply concerned about the foreign policy - unquote - because if that were the case, starting with desk officers I would say, there has to be a concern about the full range of how to make a foreign policy work. It cannot be something in the abstract that relates only to the bilateral or regional relationship, because that's an important, but very partial, part of what running a foreign policy in a democracy is about. So it doesn't help to shoot up to your seniors totally unrealistic options which have no hope of being adopted.

Explaining variance in attitudes toward domestic political factors. As we have seen on other specific topics, issue variables (salience, cleavage, and consensus; see Appendix 3) tend to be important in explaining the attitudes of officials toward domestic politics. Higher issue salience predicts an official will place more importance on domestic political factors (t_b = .304, p = .002), with issue Cleavage also predicting greater attention to such factors (t_b = .272, p = .016). Conversely, low salience or a lack of political cleavage results in officials paying less attention to domestic political factors. As one NSC aide stated it,

> There are some areas of foreign policy where you can go about your business without really considering public opinion or the Congress or the media all that much.

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Thus, officials who work in issue areas about which there is little public, news media, or congressional attention tend to find domestic politics to be less important.[1]

The importance of issue consensus is also seen in these results, with domestic political consensus on officials' issues resulting in them attaching significantly less importance to domestic political factors than other officials (t_b -.282, p = .008). Thus, while the large majority of officials place a great deal of significance upon domestic political factors, those who work in issue areas where there is perceived to be a domestic consensus on policy tend to be less concerned about domestic political feasibility than other officials.

An important trio of variables which are significantly associated with ratings of the importance of domestic politics are increasing age (t_b = .336, p = .009), higher rank (t_b = .254, p = .004), and more years spent in the government (t_b = .407, p = .000). However, the importance of rank becomes rather ambiguous when issue salience is taken into account. For officials working on low salience issues, for example, rank has a positive effect upon ratings of the importance of domestic political factors (t_b = .380, p = .020). On high salience issues, however, the effect is exactly the opposite, with lower ranking officials expressing more concern with domestic politics than their "seniors" (t_b = -.303, p = .094). Thus, while increasing rank has a major effect on attentiveness to domestic politics for those working on low salience issues, on highly salient issues, lower ranking officials seem to be even more attentive than higher ranking ones.

That age and the number of years an official has been working within the federal government are closely related is, of course a given (r = .638,

[1] To see examples of such low-salience and non-cleavage issues, refer to Appendix 3.

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p = .000). However, analysis of the effects of each of these variables upon ratings of the importance of domestic politics indicates that the more important effect comes with years spent in the government. (See table 6-2, below). This is especially the case within the oldest group of respondents, where experience in the government predicts much higher ratings of the importance of domestic politics.

Table 6-2: Associations between Importance of Domestic Political Factors, Respondent Age, and Years Spent in Government

	Association between Importance of Domestic Factors and Respondent Age		Association between Importance of Domestic Factors and Years in Government	
	Taub	Sig.	Taub	Sig.
When Respondent...				
Age 40 years or less			.164	.237
Age 41 to 50 years			.057	.779
Age 51 years or more			.533	.004
Spent 10 years or less in govt	-.109	.502		
Spent 11 to 20 years in govt	.414	.038		
Spent 21 years or more in govt	.266	.221		

n = 67

That years spent in government has such a significant effect upon the oldest group of respondents indicates a number of other relationships. First, to the degree that political appointees tend to have spent fewer years in government than those of equivalent ages, this suggests that the most senior appointees are less attentive to domestic political factors than their careerist colleagues. Indeed, looking at the relationship between ratings of the importance of domestic politics and each officials' status as an FSO or political appointee (note there is some overlap in these categories), there are no significant relationships; membership in the Foreign Service is associated

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with rating of domestic political factors at (t_b) -.079 ($p = .491$), and status as a political appointee is associated at (t_b) .027 ($p = .908$). Thus, contrary to what might be expected, appointees and non-careerists are no more likely to consider domestic political factors as important considerations than are careerist officials. Rather, the most important factor predicting attentiveness to domestic political factors seems to be the amount of experience within the the government, with more years in the government predicting higher levels of importance being attached to domestic politics. This may well be due to more experience operating within the bureaucratic "sub-culture" and thus result from a stronger adherence to the "feasibility" ethic which has been seen in previous chapters.

Views Toward the Congress

The Congress was, by far, the domestic political factor most frequently cited as important by interview subjects. In an open-ended item asking respondents to list up to three important domestic factors, 62 of 67 (91%) of respondents mentioned Congress in their list. For the most part, officials expressed the opinion that Congress was important because of the concrete legislative and fiscal constraints which it can impose; once again, practical politics and the ethic of political feasibility came through loud and clear. For instance, an office director whose responsibility included a sugar-producing country, stated the need to be cognizant of legislators' constituent interests.

> Its quite impossible to function effectively without knowing your own domestic political environment. There are various issues that come up, like sugar, where, if you don't know what the position of, say, Senator

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> Inouye or key congressional figures like that, you'll be at a very serious disadvantage.

An officer, dealing with Central American issues, indicated the need to avoid policies that could exacerbate ideological debates.

> The House can block anything it doesn't agree with. I especially mean the Democrats and left-of-center Democrats - the David Bonior Democrats. They can't work their will on every issue, but on major policies they can bring government to a halt. Thus, policies must take into consideration fear of another Vietnam. You also need to avoid anything extreme enough to alienate many liberals.

In discussing Congress, many officials also expressed many of the attitudes which emerged when discussion turned to public opinion - that a properly formulated foreign policy must enjoy support. This is seen in the following from an officer in the European Affairs bureau:

> Its very important to know what Congress is doing - its hard to over-state that. Its very important not only for the State Department's survival as an institution and to maintain good relations with Congress, but also to have an effective policy and to get things done. I think you need to make certain that you have people on your side.

Thus, overwhelmingly, the foreign policy officials interviewed placed a great deal of credence in the idea that maintaining congressional support for policy necessitates awareness and consideration of congressional opinion all through the policy process.

The widespread ethic of political feasibility and the need for congressional support of policy can be seen, as well, in responses to a questionnaire item which asked respondents to agree or disagree with a

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narrow statement on the need to be concerned with Congress. The question and its results appear immediately below.

Table 6-3: Questionnaire Item #24 Frequencies
"In the U.S. government, it is often necessary for foreign officials to be aware of congressional opinions and desires because of the Congress' oversight and budgeting roles. Beyond this, however, foreign policy officials should not be greatly concerned with the Congress on foreign policy issues."

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	0	0
Somewhat Agree	5	8
Somewhat Disagree	26	40
Strongly Disagree	34	52
	65	100

The frequency of "strong disagrees" in the above questionnaire item is striking. That 92% of respondents disagreed with the statement testifies to how widely shared are attitudes on the need to be aware of Congress as a major political factor.

Where there were differences of opinion regarding the Congress, they occurred not as to whether Congress should be a major factor in policy decisions - that it must be is virtually a given. Rather, opinions varied most as to whether or not congressional input (or as some put it, interference) in the policy process is either desirable or helpful. For example, an additional questionnaire item asked respondents to agree or disagree with a statement advocating fewer congressional restrictions on policy makers. (Results appear on the following page.) Obviously, a majority of respondents felt that Congress imposes too many restrictions upon them, though, from the frequency of "somewhat agree" responses, it is obvious there is some ambivalence even within that group. One senior official involved in Central

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Table 6-4: Questionnaire Item #4 Frequencies
"The United States would be better served if foreign policy officials were less restricted by Congress."

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	9	14
Somewhat Agree	32	49
Somewhat Disagree	17	26
Strongly Disagree	7	11
	65	100

American policy stated such a moderated view of the need for less congressional "micromanagement:"

> Any administration, State Department, or policy maker, can and will go off of the deep end, and occasionally it's good to be pulled back by the fact that what he is doing is perceived as going off of the deep end - as being dumb or as as not having been as well thought out as it should have been. I think that's fine. If its translated into strict legislation dictating how we spend every penny or we can't give money to Duarte until he sees that so-and-so gets a sentence - if it becomes micromanaging by legislative fiat - then that makes it very difficult to conduct foreign policy.

Some officials saw Congress and congressional restrictions in adversarial terms. The following statement, for instance, came from an official working on southern African issues:

> Our policy on South Africa is largely dictated by Congress. In fact, a good deal of our time here is spent in doing battle with Congress.

Often, however, congressional restrictions were discussed in more value-neutral terms, or in terms of the need to stay within congressionally imposed boundaries in order to maintain general support for policies. As one Soviet specialist stated it,

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> You can't live with them, you can't live without them. They do sometimes divert your energies... which gives you less time to work on real policies, but having domestic support is essential and we realize that.

Finally, a small number of officials explicitly set out to disagree with the majority viewpoint that Congress places too many restrictions upon foreign policy. The following deputy assistant secretary, for example, displayed irritation when discussing the attitudes of most foreign policy officials toward the Congress.

> You know, everybody complains that Congress is trying to take over the business of foreign policy, which belongs to the executive, but I've found that you can talk to Congress and get a pretty good result. When there are real differences with Congress, it really is because there's real disagreement within the country over the policy.

Whether or not officials agree on the proper role that Congress should play in foreign policy, virtually all agree that, as a political necessity, foreign policy makers must be attentive and, for the most part, responsive to the Congress in order to ensure the political success of any given policy.

Views Toward the News Media

Foreign policy officials' attitudes toward the news media display a complex combination of resentment and frustration, combined with an acceptance of their dependence upon the news media both as sources of information and transmitters of government policy to the public. In fact, there is no single prevailing attitude or shared set of norms with regard to the news media. While virtually all officials express some degree of frustration with the media, there are wide differences of opinion about the degree to which the news

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media report foreign policy fairly and accurately, and the degree to which policy officials should make themselves (and the information they have) available to reporters.

Largely because the news media play such a complex role within the system of linkage between the public and foreign policy institutions, it is impossible to deal with attitudes toward the media within a single context. Thus, this section will examine officials' attitudes toward the news media as (1) reporters of the news and politics, (2) reporters of "leaks," (3) agenda setters, and (4) attitudes on the appropriate degree of cooperation between government and media in communicating foreign policy issues to the public.

Attitudes toward the media as reporters of news and politics. The officials interviewed for this study displayed a high degree of ambivalence about the news media as reporters of events. While all officials conceded they are highly dependent upon the media for information - virtually everyone has read or at least scanned both the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* by 9:00 AM each work day - complaints about inaccuracies or distortions were quite common. The ambiguity of attitudes toward press reportage is seen, for instance in the questionnaire item in Table 6-5 (below). The virtually even split between those who agree that the media are fair and accurate and those

Table 6-5: Questionnaire Item #9 Frequencies
"For the most part, the major news media cover U.S. foreign policy accurately and fairly."

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	5	8
Somewhat Agree	29	45
Somewhat Disagree	28	43
Strongly Disagree	3	15
	65	101 *

* - Total over 100% due to rounding.

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who do not, as well as the heavy groupings in the "somewhat" categories, show how mixed attitudes are toward the media as reporters.

Virtually all officials complain (to one degree or another) about media inaccuracies. One African Affairs bureau official, discussing the media as an operationalized form of public opinion, stated that,

> Whenever I read a story about something that I know something about, I see that its chock-a-block with errors. That makes me wonder about the stories that I don't know anything about. Are they, too, chock-a-block with errors? So what's the value of the media to me? The answer is, you've got to take it into account, but the media are not necessarily a very faithful reflection of public opinion.

Some officials (36%) contend that systematic biases (usually liberal) are at the root of inaccurate reporting. Most perceived errors in reporting are attributed, however, not to reporters' political agendas or systematic bias, but rather to reporters' sloppiness and failure to fully verify information. An NSC aide, for instance, said that,

> Newspapers tend to be ready to put out a fast story without review or analysis, while TV never gets into enough depth to do any damage.

A particular pet peeve of some officials is stories based on both unverified and leaked information. The following, from a specialist in foreign military aid, is an example:

> The worst thing is an inaccurate story [generated by another bureaucrat] who has selectively manipulated the facts to come out with their own conclusions for a policy that they're interested in advocating... and they feed it to a reporter who does not check his facts and publishes it.

The media are also sometimes criticized for focusing on negative aspects of the news - for emphasizing conflicts within policy circles or unrest in the

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countries they deal with. One office director, commenting on coverage of an American Third World ally, indicated that,

> Its not peculiar to [the country], but success or every day progress really isn't a story, and there's inevitably too much of a focus on what's wrong, and given [the country's] need for more investment and more tourism, I think the reportage in general - not only of the press but also of TV - has perpetuated a misperception of instability in there. The media are interested in stories, not good news.

As will be discussed more fully below, media coverage that is perceived to be either distorted or inaccurate is not only an irritation to foreign policy officials, but also presents them with the task of correction. That is, inaccurate coverage often must not be permitted to go unrebutted, but requires some sort of governmental response. Such coverage has the effect of setting many officials' daily agenda by forcing them to respond. As will be seen below, this agenda setting function is used as a major justification by officials for the need to be attentive to news media reporting.

As the questionnaire results above indicated, however, not all officials hold predominantly negative views about the reporting of the media. While virtually all have some complaints, most of the time officials are satisfied with the news media. This came out particularly when officials discussed the news media as a "barometer" of the political "climate", or as an operationalization of public opinion. One senior official, for instance, indicated his preference to use the media as reflections of the national - as opposed to "inside the beltway" - political climate:

> For myself, I never trust my judgement on how things take place or play in other parts of the United States. I grew up in New York - I guess I'm part of the eastern establishment. I've spent most of my life overseas.

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> When I'm not overseas, I'm in Washington and really work in a high-level, intellectual environment. How we see something is by no means how someone from the West or Midwest or South is going to see it. So I'm really careful not to make overall judgements on how things have played in the U.S. by my own perceptions. The newspapers are very helpful for that kind of thing...

Attitudes toward news media reporting are thus very mixed. While officials are very much dependent upon the media for information, complaints about inaccuracy abound. There is thus an uneasy ambiguity in the minds of most officials; the news media are followed - religiously - but there remains a degree of doubt about the reliability of the stories reported.

Attitudes on the media and "leaks." One of the most pervasive concerns that subjects expressed during interviews was the fear of news leaks. Many officials worry that secret negotiating positions will be made public before they are presented during talks, or that the presentation of a controversial position in a meeting may be reported in the press as policy, rather than as an issue for discussion. They also worry that bureaucratic rivalries will result in selective leaking of information designed to embarrass either them personally or their bureau. Whatever the motivations of the sources of such information, most officials express some anxiety and frustration about the possibility of embarrassing or damaging leaks. One public affairs adviser, part of whose job was to attempt to limit the damage from news leaks that affected his bureau, expressed such anxiety in our interview.

> It is absolutely impossible to keep a secret in this town - it cannot be done. I can't tell you how many times I have learned very sensitive information, that I didn't know before, from the press. They've just been

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with an assistant secretary somewhere and had somebody spill their guts, and then they ask me for a comment; "Jesus Christ, I've never heard of such a thing", and I can't tell you... it's disheartening the number of times that's happened, and the number of times that the information conveyed is not only sensitive but accurate.

Interestingly, most officials do not blame the press - the messenger - for reporting information which is leaked to them. Most officials seem to accept the press' self-defined role in publishing reliable and relevant information, regardless of its source. Officials do, however, express a frustration with their anonymous colleagues who are the sources of such information. As one NSC staffer put it,

> I like the First Amendment, it's all wonderful and it's good, and its not the press' fault that that some idiot talks to them, but nonetheless, none of these things tends to brighten your day.

The potential for the leaking of sensitive information acts as a significant constraint upon the ways in which policy makers formulate and discuss policies, in the sense that leaked information about a policy might cause a public outcry. Even internal discussions and memoranda are subject to these constraints. As one desk officer put it,

> You're always thinking about public reaction to writings or policies, even when they're secret - "How would this look if it appeared in the paper next week?"

Another official, this time an NSC staffer, talked of the frequency with which concerns about leaks enter the foreign policy official's thinking.

> Every government [leaks], particularly in the national security area. You do things which are confidential, and which you classify, and some of those things would be embarrassing if they went public - not necessarily

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embarrassing with public opinion, but embarrassing with other governments or other parties. And you do have to keep in mind what the likelihood is of somebody leaking and what potential damage could result... and you have to keep in the back of your mind that the more controversial something is, the more likely it is to leak.

Because of the fear of leaks, full discussion of policy options often does not occur for fear that consideration of extreme or controversial options will leak and be reported in an embarrassing context. This is especially so with regard to written materials. Commenting on the decreasing use of written memoranda for the discussion of policy, an NSC official commented that, "Paper is a vanishing medium. Archivists will have a tough future ahead."[2] Fear of leaks has also resulted in fewer frank discussions at policy or inter-agency meetings. One State Department official explained the devastating effect which self-censorship for fear of leaks can - and in his example, did - have upon the formulation of policy. This official had been a member of the Panama Inter-Agency Group in the fall of 1987 and winter of 1988 (prior to the indictment for drug-trafficking of Panama's General Noriega). For several months, according to this official, the Justice Department representatives at such meetings had indicated that Noriega was being investigated, but that sufficient evidence was not likely to be found to pursue a criminal case.

In February or perhaps late January, the Justice Department representative said for the very first time, "Yes, José Blandón has been

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[2] This official also commented on the decreasing use of State and NSC computer mail facilities for the discussion of policy. One lesson of the Iran/Contra scandal was that electronic mail was routinely archived and could be used to embarrassing effect in the future, as was the case with Oliver North. Thus, this NSC aide stated that, "People for a while were ignorant of the genius of electro-magnetism - that everything can be saved and saved. People know about that now and [as a result] its a much less frank medium."

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deposed by the grand jury in Tampa, and... we feel we have enough to move forward on this case. Does anybody here want to discuss it or raise any objections?" Now this is a meeting with Justice, Commerce, NSC, White House, State, Defense, Canal Commission, NSA's got somebody there... And there was an uncomfortable silence. "Who wants to go first?" The problem was, nobody wanted to go first. Nobody wanted to say, "Well, in light of our efforts to get rid of this guy, indictments could really complicate things." Nobody wanted to be the person who found his name in the pages of the *Post* the next day... as having defended General Noriega during a secret inter-agency meeting. As a result, it was never considered, the indictment was handed up, and we were left with a situation which did, indeed, complicate our efforts to get rid of him.

Fear of news leaks, thus, has come to act as a significant constraint upon the manner in which foreign policy officials operate. The fear of public censure resulting from such leaks forces officials to be ever more cognizant of the need to anticipate public responses, not only to policy decisions, but also to reports that certain policy options had even been considered.

Attitudes toward the media as agenda setters. When officials were asked how much importance they placed in following news media coverage of foreign affairs, the large majority (39 of 59, or 63%) indicated that it was very or nearly always important for them to do so. The major (job-related) justification which officials provided when asked why they paid so much attention to the news media was that the media act as agenda setters. This agenda setting function is seen by officials to operate at a number of levels.

The most basic level at which the news media operate as agenda setters for foreign policy officials is when they actually dictate the tasks which an

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official will do in a given day. That is, when a major newspaper or network runs a story on an issue which an officials deals with, it has, in effect, set (at least a part of) his or her agenda for that day. As Bernard Cohen (1963) demonstrated, when the media highlight a foreign policy issue, the government is effectively required to respond to it. At the level of individual officials, this may require the writing of press guidance for the daily news briefing, contacting relevant reporters to provide "background" briefings, or otherwise seeing to it that the "official" position is reported and as much accurate information is contained in subsequent stories as possible. For those who work on issues which are often in the news, the media's agenda setting role is thus particularly important. As an official in African Affairs at State told it,

> You could argue that the first duty is to read the newspaper every morning, and that tells you what you'll be doing that day, simply because so much of our time is fire-fighting.

The media's agenda setting role also applies to setting topics of national political discourse. In effect, the national political dialogue is seen to be limited to that which the press chooses to report. One senior appointee, for instance, discussed the difficulty he had in trying to get specific policies and issues covered by the media. He went on to say that,

> Clearly both Congress and the press have a great deal to say. The press because unless the press says it, it doesn't exist; it doesn't enter the debate. The press, because it has a monopoly (in effect) upon on what exists, is very important...

Another official, this time a senior FSO, also attributed agenda setting roles to both the media and Congress in saying the following:

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> Foreign policy is defined in two ways around this town, two times a day: One is when the press asks questions, and the other is when the Congress does something. Sometimes we do something, too.

Officials are also, in being attentive to the media agenda setting role, often aware of distinctions between different sources of news. Thus, officials tend to be particularly attentive to the prestige media: *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and the major television networks. This emphasis is explained by those in the foreign policy process as necessary because of who the prestige press influences.[3] The following quote from a senior FSO illustrates this:

> People in Washington are very political animals. What concerns them most is that which is affecting the people who count. That means that certain newspapers, for example, and national TV media, have an inordinate impact on the way these issues are viewed. If something appears on the front page of the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*, there's a virtual certainty that the president will read it, while if it appears on the front page of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, chances are he won't have read it.

The need to be aware of the stories which the "powers that be" in Washington are seeing in relation to one's issues is thus widely held. One might expect, therefore, that for officials who work on low salience issues, this concern will be minimal. But even those officials who work in areas which the media tend not to focus upon express a need to follow news media reporting of foreign affairs. Officials who might expect a "prestige" press story on his or her issue only once or twice in a given year, nevertheless perceive a need to be reactive to the event - to be ready to respond quickly so as to appear "on top of" one's

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[3] Officials rarely state that the media has much of an effect upon their own policy positions.

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job. Thus, even for those who are not often on the political agenda, there is a great deal of attention to the media's agenda setting role.

Attitudes on government/media cooperation. Because they are both dependent on and, to some extent, distrustful of the news media, there is a great deal of disagreement among foreign policy officials regarding the degree to which they should cooperate with the media (by giving briefings, answering questions, or even returning phone calls) and, in more general terms, the degree to which the policy process should be open or closed to media (and thereby public) scrutiny.[4] For those who feel that officials should not cooperate with the news media, such attitudes stem largely from other attitudes which we have addressed above. Some, perceiving the media as largely inaccurate, sloppy, or biased, do not brief the media or give interviews for fear of being misquoted, having their statements reprinted out of context, or having the confidentiality of sensitive discussions breached.[5] Another reason which some officials gave for withholding information from the media was the need for security - to avoid giving out information which might be sensitive or classified. One public affairs adviser explained how such attitudes hamper his ability to perform his job, as many officials refuse even to yield information to colleagues who do not meet strict "need to know" criteria.

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[4] If there is systematic bias in my interview method, it is in regard to the willingness of officials to be accessible to the public. For understandable reasons, most of the officials I did interview preached the need for openness. Several officials I contacted, however, excused themselves because, they indicated, they had made it their policy not to give outside interviews. Nevertheless, a number of interview subjects were candid about the fact that they do not believe in being open with the news media (which, by the time the interview items on the media were reached, I was obviously not a member of).

[5] A systematic problem in interviewing officials who held such attitudes was that they generally asked not to be tape recorded. I thus do not have illustrative statements of such attitudes available to me.

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> I frequently have the experience of going to someone for information - a desk officer let's say - and having that desk officer tell me, "Well you really don't need to know this, so I'm not going to tell you," and I have to say, "One, you really don't have that luxury, and if you'd like to go upstairs and talk to [the assistant secretary] about it, let's go do it right now. But you have to understand before we do that, that I'm on your side. I'm a Foreign Service Officer. What I need to know is what I may, and more importantly, may not, say to the press." It takes federal bureaucrats a long time to understand that when you're dealing with public affairs people, you're not dealing with the enemy.

Related to the preference not to freely provide information to the press for security purposes is the attitude that foreign relations - centered as they are around diplomacy - should be conducted quietly and confidentially. That is is, the most effective diplomacy is that which the public never sees. Because of this, many officials involved in sensitive negotiations prefer to avoid contact with the news media, so as not to jeopardize either the confidence of other negotiating parties, or to comment upon potential bargaining positions. Along these lines, for instance, a State Department senior deputy assistant secretary, at that time involved in ongoing and sensitive multi-lateral negotiations (which came to a successful outcome) stated that,

> Mostly we prefer there be [no media coverage of our issues] at all. There really is a Heisenberg effect - things that are observed are deformed by being observed.

Interestingly, however, some subjects expressed the opposite sentiment when it came to the press and ongoing negotiations, feeling that it was better to maintain contact with the media in order to have some input, and perhaps thereby exercise control over, the reporting of such negotiations. This was

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the view of an NSC staffer, who coincidentally referred to precisely the same negotiations as the State official quoted above.

> We found in the negotiations that the [other countries involved] were very sensitive about what was said [in the press] about the negotiations and we tried to make sure that there were no distortions of fact, so we gave a lot of background briefings to the press. In general, we want to make sure that they know what the basic facts are and that they don't rely on rumor. They don't always write the way we want them to, obviously, but at least we can give them the basic facts.

The attitude that one should maintain contact and cooperate with the news media in order to increase the probability of (if not ensure) that media reporting on issues is (what officials perceive to be) accurate, was cited by a number of individuals. The following desk officer, for instance, demonstrated a similar - if more patronizing - attitude:

> I sympathize with journalists, but they do not fully comprehend the issues they report on. They don't have the background, they don't know the issues, yet they're under this time constraint and they've got to produce, and what often comes out is an inadequate discussion of the issues, which is why we go out of our way if the press come to us and to give them at least some background information, because we really know how difficult it is for them, and we realize how important it is that they at least understand what the U.S. government perspective is and that they understand the issues.

Thus, some officials, perceiving as they often do that media coverage on foreign policy is either sloppy, inaccurate, or unsophisticated, attempt to rectify the situation themselves by giving the information to the media which will (as they see it) make for more accurate reporting.

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Some officials combine an attitude of cooperation with the press to the perceived inevitability of news leaks. For these officials, the feeling is that if the information is important and sensitive, it is bound to be leaked some time; thus it is better to be open with the media in order to have more control over how the information is reported. As one desk officer put it,

> Very few things in this country are really covert, because both sides have learned the art of leaking.... 'Cause everybody leaks now, for all kinds of reasons. Its a hell-of-a-way to run government, but its the way people do it, and you have to convince people that there's no way they can really do things quietly.

Along the same lines, because it is often perceived to be inevitable that a story will eventually become known to the media, some officials see the need to be open with them in order to maintain both their personal credibility with reporters, and the credibility of the government as a whole. Thus, a Near East bureau official stated his opinion that officials should,

> Get out there right away, with as much information as you can, in a very honest way... You can't cover up. That'll never work. Eventually, if there's something seedy under the rug, it's going to pop up and hurt you and your policies and its going to destroy your credibility. So you can't lie to the media. You have to give them as much information as possible...

Finally, the ethic of domestic consensus also influences officials' attitudes toward cooperating with the news media. In order to build consensus, one should be cooperative with the media in order to ensure that the information which might solidify public support will be reported by the media. In other words, the need for an effective effort of "public education" requires a cooperative relationship with news organizations. One official,

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referring to American operations in the Persian Gulf during the Iran/Iraq War, described his dealings with the media:

> During the period between the spring of '87 and the summer of '88 I would spend perhaps half my time talking to journalists and editorial writers - more time with them than with Congress, for example. With the media, we were extremely interested in sustaining a very solid consensus in the country - for example, when we had the military exchanges with Iran that that did not spook the public - so that in the end if we asserted ourselves with force, that that would not cause the unravelling of policy, since Americans are uncomfortable with the use of force.

There is thus a recognition among some officials that if the goal of domestic consensus requires public education, then the news media, as the necessary instruments of such education efforts, must be courted and provided with the information which will allow that effort to go through.

The ambivalent mixture of attitudes toward the media in other areas leads to officials to hold a mixed set of attitudes when it comes to cooperation with the media. For some, the perceived tendency of reporters to distort information or to sensationalize issues leads them to eschew contact with the press - to try to influence or change coverage is simply too risky, given their views of the media. For others, the same perceptions of distortions, inaccuracy, and/or bias lead them to make efforts to "set the record straight" - to try to cultivate relationships with news organizations which will allow them to moderate some of these negative tendencies.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that the attitudes toward the media which have been discussed are often influenced by, and related, to one another. It can be difficult to isolate attitudes toward the media as reporters from one's perception of their role in the reporting of leaked information, and

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ultimately whether or not news reporters can be trusted either as objective mirrors of the news, or as trusted recipients of "background" information.

Views Toward Interest Groups

Having examined attitudes toward Congress and the media, we now examine the attitudes of foreign policy officials toward the various interest groups that voice opinions about American foreign policy. This obviously includes a wide variety of groups, but this section will focus on ethnic interests, business groups, and ideational groups such as human rights and religious organizations. While this listing does not include all of the types of groups that may voice opinions upon foreign policy, it includes the kinds of groups which officials themselves mentioned most frequently. The mere inclusion or exclusion of certain groups or kinds of groups from this discussion, therefore, says something about the way in which officials in the policy apparatus view them, or, as the case may be, do not view them.

This section also does not attempt to be an exhaustive discussion about either attitudes toward interest groups, or their influence upon the foreign policy process. Much of the following emerged from discussion with officials about interest groups as forms of public opinion, rather than as distinct political factors. Thus, there will be some overlap between this section and the discussion of interest groups as operationalized forms of public opinion in Chapter Five. Most importantly, however, the following sub-sections represent impressionistic assessments of attitudes toward different types of interest groups.

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Ethnic groups. Most officials do not need to be concerned with specific ethnic groups. This may be so either because they deal with issues about which there is not a significant domestic ethnic constituency, or because the ethnic constituencies which do exist are either not politically mobilized or not numerous enough to have a significant political impact. For an important minority of officials, however, specific ethnic groups are major concerns as domestic political constraints. Groups that officials mentioned as important to them tended to be the most politically mobilized, including Jews, Arabs, Cubans, Greeks, Irish, and various eastern European nationalities (such as Poles, Slovaks, and Ukrainians).

These mobilized ethnic groups were seen in largely negative terms - as factors which made the policy maker's life more difficult. They were, first of all, seen to be attentive to virtually every policy decision affecting their interests and home countries. Thus, as an official working on east European issues stated,

> If you're doing anything on Poland, you have to take the American Polish community into account.

Other officials, referring to such east European groups, discussed the related need to be concerned with the opinions of Chicago-area members of Congress. Similar concerns were expressed about Cuban, and, especially, Jewish groups. Sometimes discussion of such groups revealed a great deal of resentment by the officials working in the policies areas about which such groups are interested. Ethnic groups may be resented because of what officials perceive to be over-reaction to decisions, and the failure of some groups to realize that policy makers are not their enemies and do not wish to betray their interests. Resentment of this kind was especially evident in discussing Greek groups, for

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instance. Such resentment could also be seen toward Jewish groups and, as in the example below, Cubans.

> It's interesting. The Cuban-American community, which has been the beneficiary of a fair amount of attention from this administration, remains woefully uninformed about U.S. policy toward Cuba. One has to think, really, that its willful ignorance on the part of many Cuban-American leaders. I must have had more than a dozen experiences batting down beliefs among Cuban-Americans that the Reagan administration is about to sell them out. There's a sentiment in the Cuban-American community that there is a warming trend going on in Cuba/U.S. relations. Well, the fact of the matter is that there is none-absolutely not. It's crazy.... So, in spite of all the attention paid to it, this one group still doesn't understand. Who knows why?

Thus, through frequent and vocal expressions of opinion, specific mobilized interest groups often become important political factors in the decisions and actions of foreign policy officials - their views are certainly taken into account - but they may also come to be perceived as reactionary, misinformed, and on occasion, destructive of sound policy.

As a final note on ethnic groups, it should be added that some officials mentioned certain groups not cited above, but mentioned them in terms of unmobilized or ineffective groups, and thus not of major concern. Officials dealing with African issues, for instance, often mentioned that they sometimes look to the opinions of Black Americans, but because they saw most Blacks as politically complacent, they did not feel particularly constrained by Black opinion. One official, for instance, commented on the general lack of Black activism on the South Africa issue:

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> The demonstrations that one sees outside the C St. entrance [of the State Department] are almost exclusively white. You almost never see Blacks... [demonstrating on South Africa] in Washington, D.C., which is a substantially Black city, and with, [possibly the largest] number of articulate, politically sensitive, active, educated Blacks in the U.S. Blacks in Washington are almost unconcerned with what's going on in South Africa.[6]

Thus, while some ethnic groups were perceived as domestic factors to be taken into consideration, political mobilization was a key factor in the degree of attention focussed upon them. While more mobilized - and thus more vocal - groups may be resented by many officials, they nevertheless succeed in having their views taken into account during policy deliberations, as well as constraining policy options.

Business groups. Officials' views toward business interest groups are (to some extent) split according to the types of issues with which they deal. Officials whose policy areas are centered around economic issues - not unnaturally - tend to define U.S. interests in terms of American businesses. One official in the Economic & Business Affairs bureau at State, indicated that in aiding American business,

> We always think that we pursue the national interest. People who represent particular interest groups don't think that they're representing solely the interests of the natural gas people, but that their

[6] These same officials also indicated that they wished that American Blacks were more interested in African/American relations, as such interest might bring more such issues on to the national political agenda.

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> interests are the nation's interests. To ignore their interests is to harm the national interest. Everybody thinks in terms of national interest...

Thus, those dealing with business interests of varying opinions tend to conceptualize them in terms of varying interpretations of national, not solely business, interests.

For those who do not deal either exclusively or primarily with economic issues, however, business interest groups are viewed either as one set of interests within a broader pluralist domestic political framework, or in some cases as self-interested impediments to national - as opposed to parochial - foreign policy interests. Most officials, when discussing American business interests, tend to define them as just one of many domestic interests which must be taken into account when making policy. Taken with other domestic interests, they form a pluralist model of American political opinion. Such a pluralist model is seen, for instance, in the competitive picture described by an official working on environmental issues at State:

> Environmental organizations have a lot of influence on policy. Key industry groups also have a lot of influence. And what tends to happen is that these advocacy groups battle it out on the merits in the executive branch. This is a problem. The public at large does not tend to express opinions and these advocacy groups therefore really impact upon the process, and its the responsibility of executive branch officials to try to balance these groups off against each other.

For some officials, the result of such pluralist competition - between business and other interests or between different business interests - comes to form a mosaic which represents informed public opinion. This was expressed by the following office director at State:

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> From my personal viewpoint, I don't think there is any such thing as public opinion. What there is, is articulate special interest groups. Its not public opinion, its articulation of special interest groups, and no matter what issue you look at, its very rare that there is something - other than the Pledge of Allegiance issue - that really manifests public opinion.

For other officials, such interests must be taken into account, but clearly represent self-interested opinions, as with the following office director:

> When I get a group coming in - whether its a church group, a pressure group, an economic group, a banking group, a political group, an ethnic group - and they're yelling at me, there are very few things that I can be certain of, but one of them is that they're not speaking for the American people.

The parochial interests of business groups are often seen as an impediment to the policy goals which officials advocate. Interviewing officials on Far East desks, for instance, revealed officials' annoyance with certain domestic agricultural interests which had mounted publicity efforts against palm and coconut oils.[7] One official recalled prior years in Africa working on development projects:

> I remember we wanted to go into a rice growing project in Africa... No the people in Louisiana won't like that, you see. I tried to get a shrimp project going in Senegal... I was told that the Louisiana shrimp cultivators don't want the United States to breed competition.

In general, most of the officials interviewed for this study had neither especially positive or negative attitudes toward American business groups and interests. While most (except for those working specifically on economic

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[7] Palm oil and coconut oil are saturated fats (hence the negative publicity) and represent major exports for countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia.

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issues) do not equate the policy preferences and interests of American business with the national interest, neither did they dismiss business groups as domestic political factors. Rather, business groups are viewed rather benignly, as yet another set of voices making up a plural political universe. These voices must be listened to, and factored into policy accordingly. However, as with other political factors, when they advocate policy or behave in a manner which officials see as contrary to their perception of a "national interest", they sometimes come to resent specific groups. All in all, officials tended neither to discount the viewpoints of business interests, nor to pay them extra attention.

Ideational and other interest groups. Several other categories of interest group were mentioned by officials, though not with the recurring frequency of those discussed above. Among such other groups were, for instance, the AFL-CIO, whose international activities involve it in union movements in many developing countries. Along the same lines, human rights groups - Amnesty International in particular - were mentioned with some frequency. These specific groups are (by and large) respected by foreign policy professionals as informed, non-partisan voices, and they are seen as fair in their reporting about, and policy positions on, social conditions abroad.

Religious interests are also accorded a degree of attention by foreign policy officials. Some, as with human rights and labor groups, are seen as impartial advocates for human rights and social reform, especially in regard to relations in Third World countries where religious groups often administer development and relief efforts. Some religious groups, however, are seen to be tied to specific political agendas. This is so with regard to eastern Europe, for instance, where Catholic groups associated with specific nationalities are seen

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as anti-Soviet extremists. In such cases, groups are accorded the same sort of attention as the ethnic constituencies they represent - always listened to, but often dismissed as excessively strident.

Another type of religious group which is perceived as extremist and pushing specific political agendas is what might be termed "peace groups." Some officials, for instance, derided the so-called "sanctuary movement".[8] Though the lines of definition are extremely unclear in this area, religious groups which are perceived to be non-partisan, active in a large number of countries (not solely Central America, for instance), and which work toward widely agreed upon goals (such as Third World development) are viewed both as having legitimate and respected views on international issues related to them, and in some ways as allies working toward goals shared by policy makers themselves. However, when religious groups are viewed as representative of extreme political elements or as vehicles of some other political movement (like the sanctuary groups), they are accorded virtually no attention by officials. Even worse than being heard and dismissed, such groups often come to be ignored by officials who see them as unyielding ideologues.

Public Opinion, Congress, Media, and Interest Groups

To a large extent, the boundaries separating public opinion, the Congress, news media, and interest groups are extremely blurred. As we have seen previously, some of these factors are used by foreign policy officials as representative of others. Moreover, the political interdependencies of the

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[8] The sanctuary movement involves church groups which give sanctuary to illegal aliens fleeing from rightist governments in Central America.

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public, Congress, media, and interest groups are intricate and often (as for legislators up for reelection) quite tangible. Thus, we have examined each of these domestic political factors in terms both of "public opinion", and as distinct factors. In concluding this chapter, then, we examine, first, the relative importance which officials give to the domestic political factors we have examined. Then, having disaggregated public opinion and domestic politics into separate operationalized forms, we will briefly pull them back together before moving on to an examination (in Chapter Seven) of their impact (as "public opinion") within the policy process.

Relative importances of domestic political factors. Because the domestic political factors we have examined are so highly interdependent, as forms of public opinion they may come to look very much like the quintessential "seamless web." Nevertheless certain elements stand out as more important than others. As Table 6-6 (below) shows, whether officials are asked about major political factors generally, or major domestic political factors, the Congress stands out as the domestic factor upon which they place the most emphasis.

Table 6-6: Frequencies of Mentions of Domestic Political Factors as Important Political Factors

Domestic Political Factor	# Mentioning as Important General Political Factor	# Mentioning as Important Domestic Political Factor
Public Opinion	9	28
Congress	23	62
News Media	2	17
Interest Groups	4	25
n = 67		

Note: Frequencies are number of officials mentioning specific domestic political factors in response to two open-ended interview items asking which political factors, first in general, then with regard to domestic political factors, were most important to them in making decisions

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That Congress should be accorded importance by such a large number of officials is perhaps not surprising, given Congress' oversight and budgeting roles. However, as was seen above, officials seek the support of Congress in order to ensure the feasibility of a given policy over time, in much the same way as broader public support is sought. Indeed, to a large extent, officials see public support and congressional support as synonymous; Congress reflects public attitudes and is itself a segment of the articulate public. Given this dual aspect of the congressional role in foreign policy - as both overseer and authorizer of foreign operations, and as a mirror of domestic political opinion - the Congress stands out as the most salient domestic political factor for foreign policy officials. It is not only important as an institution unto itself, but also as an aspect of public opinion.

Public opinion - even though tightly interwoven with other aspects of domestic politics - emerges from the results of Table 6-7 (above) as an important domestic concern unto itself. Undoubtedly, however, it is not as salient a factor for most officials as is the Congress. This is hardly surprising, of course. "Public opinion" does not hold hearings, call desk officers on the telephone, pass restrictive legislation, or scrutinize bureaucratic activity the way Congress does. But public opinion, as the force which ultimately drives other domestic political institutions, remains a consideration which officials must account for in their policy decisions.

Interest groups also are accorded some importance as political factors impacting upon foreign policy officials. As was seen earlier, interest groups can be seen either as specific segments of the mass public, or as an articulate form of public opinion. Because they, unlike the mass public, seek out policy officials in order to present their viewpoints, interest groups maintain the attention of officials. However, policy makers usually discern a difference

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between interest group opinions, and both mass public opinion and national interests. They are wary of being influenced to too-large an extent by such groups. Thus, while interest group opinion is more tangible than other forms of public opinion, many officials discount it as a major factor in policy decisions. Nevertheless, for officials working on a specific minority of issues, economic and ethnic interest groups can become major factors.

Finally, the news media are seen as only minor factors in policy decisions. Such is not to say that the news media are not important to officials in other ways. The media are certainly the most important sources of foreign affairs and political information for foreign policy officials. They are also crucially important and closely followed as agenda setters. However, officials indicated that they did not take the news media into account as a major factor in making decisions.

We should not be satisfied with this, however. Certainly, policy makers are concerned with adverse public reactions to policy decisions. The media - as transmitters and interpreters of such decisions for the public at large - must therefore be taken into account. The public will react - or not react - based largely upon what the media do or do not report. Thus, foreign policy officials are very much concerned with the manner in which the news media portray an issue or report events. This was seen especially in the widespread irritation which officials displayed when discussing inaccuracies in media reporting. They are thus concerned with the media to the extent that they affect other salient political factors, whether that be Congress, public opinion, or other governments.

In sum, foreign policy officials report that the news media are not important considerations in actual policy decisions. But the media must often be considered in the execution of policy, to the extent that domestic political

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support is necessary for successful implementation. The need to consider the media during implementation is also highlighted by the emphasis which most officials place upon "public education" as an aspect of implementation. "Public education" would be nearly impossible without the news media. Thus, the media become a major factor for policy makers in the successful execution of foreign policy.

The importance of the "wider public". As has been shown above, officials demonstrate a widely shared norm emphasizing the domestic political feasibility of foreign policy options. This norm exists just as strongly for a wider definition of the American public - for the entire domestic political context - as it does for a more narrow definition of public opinion. Indeed, to the extent that it includes the Congress - viewed nearly universally as a major political consideration - the domestic political context of American foreign policy is accorded a great deal of importance as an element in decision making.

Public opinion fits into this wide domestic context as a sine qua non. Officials (rightly) see public opinion as virtually synonymous with the wider setting of domestic politics. It is at once the target of political communication, the arena for political debate, and the ultimate determinant of the domestic political environment. It is thus ultimately not possible to separate public opinion from any discussion of the role of domestic political institutions in foreign policy. Such institutions are seen by officials as transmitters - or mediators - of public opinion. Thus the permeability of the foreign policy bureaucracy to the opinion of these institutions as an important consideration in the examination, not only of how officials view "public opinion," but also in examining the avenues by which public attitudes can be brought to bear in the policy process. Having seen, therefore, how public opinion (in several

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manifestations) is viewed by officials in the policy process, the chapter which follows (Chapter Seven) will examine the impact of public opinion on individuals in the policy process.

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Chapter 7. The Role of Public Opinion in the Foreign Policy Process

We have now set the stage for the examination of the role of public opinion in the policy process. We have seen that policy makers express attitudes about the public's role which, while largely critical of the public's knowledge and attention span, are generally supportive of the need for public input into American foreign policy decisions. We have also seen that the means by which such officials come to view public opinion are ad hoc, and that public opinion per se is largely seen as a complicated mix of public political expressions, Congressional, news media, and interest group opinions, and public opinion poll results. Thus, having examined how foreign policy officials view the various manifestations of public opinion, we are now ready to examine how public opinion affects them in their policy roles.

The impact of public opinion upon individuals in the policy process will be examined at two distinct stages of the policy process; policy formulation (decision making) and policy implementation. This chapter will first examine the role which public opinion plays as a factor to be considered during the creation of policy. It will then examine officials' responsiveness to public opinion once a decision has already been made and a policy is being implemented. As will be seen below, the consideration accorded public opinion during these two phases of the policy process differs considerably.

To say that we are about to embark upon an examination of the influence or impact of public opinion on American foreign policy would not be wholly accurate. Rather, this chapter will examine how public opinion impacts the policy decisions and behavior of individuals within the policy process. While the findings presented here may be said to be suggestive of public influence upon foreign policy in the aggregate, it would be risky to

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assume that the behavior which is reported at the individual level is necessarily either determined by or determinative of the aggregate behavior of a group of individuals. But by understanding how public influence is played out among individuals, the process by which public opinion is eventually translated or factored into policy outcomes can at least be better understood.

Public Opinion as a Decision Factor

In academic discussions of foreign policy decision making, it is often taken as a given that some sort of "rationality" should characterize the policy process. Rationality in this context has had various specific definitions, but in general terms, rational decision making is usually thought to involve the consideration of full and complete information, and the consideration of all relevant domestic and international factors, leading to decisions entailing optimal cost/benefit ratios (Allison, 1971; George, 1980). It can easily be argued that public opinion is a factor of sufficient import which should - rationally - be taken into account during the policy process; as public opinion certainly impacts foreign policy officials via its influence upon the Congress, and by way of the political calculations of the President and his partisan allies. Accepting, therefore, that public opinion is a factor of sufficient importance to be included in any "ideal" decision making process, we will want to know the degree to which the public is taken into account in the actual decision process, prior to the implementation of policy.

It is clear from earlier findings (Chapter Three), that most foreign policy officials do consider public opinion to be an important factor in the ultimate success of specific foreign policies. It is thereby "rational", given

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these prior attitudes, to take public opinion into account during the decision stages of policy making. This section, therefore, explores the degree to which officials do, in practice, factor public opinion into the decisions which lead to foreign policy.

General importance of public opinion as a decision factor. One of the central topics of conversation during interviews for this research was the importance of public opinion as a factor to be considered in the formulation of policy recommendations and decisions. A number of questions were used to evaluate varying aspects of this topic. The simplest and most straight-forward asked "Is public opinion important to you in formulating decisions or recommendations?" As might be expected, given the prevailing set of attitudes supporting the need for public input into policy decisions (Chapter Three), by and large respondents indicated that public opinion was an important factor to them (Table 7-1, below).

Table 7-1: Frequency of Responses to question "How important is public opinion to you..."

	Frequency	Percent
Never or Rarely Important	3	4
Slightly or Occasionally Important	21	31
Somewhat or Often Important	27	40
Very, Always, or Nearly Always Important	17	25
	68	100

As the data in Table 7-1 show, nearly two-thirds of those interviewed attributed at least moderate importance to American public opinion as a factor in their making of decisions. Simple policy feasibility was often given as a reason for according public opinion such a degree of importance. The

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following excerpt from an official working on southern African issues, indicates a need to balance ideal policies with feasible policies.

> I think there are important things to be learned from following trends in public opinion, and always, when you do something, you can make up your mind what should be done, but you also have to think of what can be done.

In conjunction with the attitudes described in Chapter Three, many of those who considered public opinion important to them did so because of their perception of the political imperatives of foreign policy decision making - that domestic support of foreign policy is a crucial element in the success a given policy. This need to take public opinion into account is reflected in the following statement of an official in State's East Asian and Pacific Affairs bureau:

> I think any good policy from a more experienced professional almost instinctively takes public opinion into account when they (sic) formulate foreign policy. You really cannot have a successful policy that does not enjoy popular support, and the idea that you can pursue something and eventually persuade people to buy it... Maybe you can, but I think that's an approach to policy that is fraught with peril. It's much better to know that you have solid support for policy early-on.

Closely related to the perceived need for support of a policy decision, is the idea that, at the very least, a policy decision must not create public controversy or opposition. Elements of both are seen, for instance, in the following excerpt from an interview with an NSC staffer:

> First of all, even on a short term policy, you have to consider how its going to play, because if you do something and get lambasted by the public, people are not happy about that, and then if you're doing a long

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> term policy you need a degree of national consensus to carry it through. So public opinion is very intrinsic for policy.

A clearer statement of the need to account for public opinion in order to avoid controversy is seen in the following statement by a senior deputy assistant secretary:

> There are times when public opinion pushes policy, but more often than not I think its trying to avoid things that just wouldn't stand the scrutiny of an irate public. Constraint isn't the wrong word, its just you have to be aware of what the limits are of public opinion. Not that we're trying to pull things on the American public, its just that some things which seem very reasonable to foreigners - things they ask us to do particularly in the trade area - would be very unpopular in this country and we certainly can't get ourselves into a position where the policy becomes untenable because it sounds good to the other side. Public opinion is where you start defining your interests.

As was suggested at the end of Chapter Three, the combination of low evaluations of the public's foreign policy sophistication, together with an ethic emphasizing the need to take public opinion into account in making decisions, often seems to result in an attitude centered around the notion that public opinion needs to be considered primarily in order to avoid generating opposition. Thus, for many, public acquiescence on a given policy is as good as public support, and thus the consideration of public opinion takes on an aspect of avoidance of disapproval, rather than a search for approval.

Among the remaining one-third or so who considered public opinion to be either a minor or completely irrelevant factor in their decision making, issue salience, or to be more exact the lack of it, was often a factor in individual responses. Public opinion was often not a factor simply because the

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issues involved were too obscure or technical to have created any public attitudes which need to be taken into account. The following quote from an official who works on technical security issues exemplifies this:

> I think in broad terms its important. But the issues I deal with tend not to have a public opinion. So its terribly important to keep track of public attitudes toward whether we should sign an INF treaty or not. Its not terribly important to keep track of public attitudes for the specific decisions I face because there tend not to be any attitudes.

Another set of respondents suggested that public opinion was not an important factor to them because a public consensus already existed on their issues. Public opinion on such issues was already known to be supportive of the general outlines of policy and thus need not be considered for specific decisions in pursuit of the policy. Explanations such as these were given by two (out of three) interviews conducted in the Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs bureau at State, for instance. The following excerpt is from one of these sessions, where the individual subject indicated that he did not feel the need to factor public opinion opinion into decisions because,

> Public opinion gives you a broad mandate [to support human rights in other countries] and within that mandate its your job to try to conscientiously use the special knowledge you have to do the right thing.

Officials who dealt with trade issues sometimes expressed a similar feeling that broad public support of free trade principles allowed them a large degree of latitude, which obviated the need to consider public opinion in most decisions. Some officials involved in arms control also saw a basic public agreement with the policy of pursuing arms control, and thus felt little need to account for public opinion on specific tactics in pursuit of their policy goals.

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Relative importance of public opinion as a decision factor: Open-ended responses. To merely say that public opinion is important to most of the respondents does not, unfortunately, provide a great deal of enlightenment about its importance relative to the multitude of other factors which come into play in foreign policy decision making. In order, therefore, to begin to assess public opinion's relative importance, a number of screening questions were asked early in all interviews (prior to any specific inquiries about public opinion). This screening and ordering of questions was done as a check against the "importance of public opinion" question - if public opinion was truly a major factor, we would expect to find it being mentioned in an open-ended question asking the respondent to indicate which of the factors dealt with were the most important in his or her issue area.[1] Each respondent was free to mention any kind of decision factor, and up to five such factors were coded per respondent. Table 7-2 (below) lists the responses to this open-ended question. As one might expect, a number of responses cited international political factors or principles of American policy (Table 7-2, left-hand column), most frequent of which included the need to protect the "national interest" or "national security".

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[1] The large majority of respondents were not told, prior to interviews, that the principle focus of this research was public opinion in the foreign policy process. Those who inquired about the specific topics for interviews were told that the interview would focus on political factors or, more specifically, domestic political factors in decision making. Thus, every effort was made not to prompt responses which would include public opinion as a mentioned factor in the early stages of the interview.

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Table 7-2: Frequencies of Major Decision Factors Cited by Respondents

Factor	Frequency	Factor	Frequency
National Interest (General, vague)	23	American Domestic Politics (general)	11
National Security	11	U.S. Public Opinion	9
U.S. Economic Interests	5	U.S. Congress	23
Situation in Foreign Country(ies)	7	U.S.- based Interest Groups	4
Maintaining Good Bilateral Relations	7	U.S. News Media	2
Alliance Relations	10		
Regional Stability/Regional Relations	4	Feasibility/Practicality	5
Countering Communism	3		
Ethics/Morality	2	Bureaucratic Politics	9
Support American Principles (vague)	4	Administration Policy Goals	20
Support for Human Rights	4		
Support for Free Trade Principles	5		

Note: Based upon responses from 67 interview subjects to open-ended question. Each respondent coded with up to five responses.

Two examples of this (most frequent) type of response appear below:

> As career diplomats, we view our role as to provide sound advice; to flag political problems, but to focus on what's in the national interest.

> I like to do the best policy for the U.S. government - for the U.S. interest - as the number one consideration. I think that always has to be the number one consideration. If its a good policy you can sell it. But secondarily has to be your plan of how to convince the public of something, especially if its controversial.

The right-hand column of Table 7-2 lists factors which bear a closer relation to domestic politics, chief of which is Congress as a major factor in decision making. Explicit, unsolicited references to public opinion as a major factor were relatively few (nine in sixty-seven cases), though public opinion was mentioned more often than many other factors. When this is compared to the frequencies of responses to the subsequent question asking individuals to identify how important public opinion was to them in making decisions, this casts some doubt upon the the validity of the findings from that item (seen in

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Table 7-1, above). While the question which explicitly asked respondents to assess the importance of public opinion identified nearly two-thirds of the sample (forty four respondents) citing public opinion as at least somewhat or often important to them, the open-ended item resulted in only nine (less than one-sixth) of the respondents citing public opinion as a major factor.

It is not sufficient, however, to stop with this and say that respondents (at the later stage of the interview) exaggerated the importance of public opinion when explicitly prompted to discuss the public's role. Given the findings of Chapter Five that public opinion may be represented by, if not be equivalent to, other domestic political factors, we must also consider a number of additional response categories to the open-ended question. Congress, for instance, was mentioned as a major factor by twenty three respondents (Table 7-2), while interest groups and the news media were mentioned by two and four individuals respectively. If, as was seen in Chapter Five, these domestic political factors are often considered as operationalized forms of public opinion, might not their inclusion in the open-ended response list indicate that public opinion, both as a concept and as an operationalized factor, is more important than is otherwise indicated by the nine respondents who explicitly mentioned public opinion as a major factor? Thus, by including operationalizations of public opinion as major factors, might public opinion actually be as important as is suggested by responses to questions explicitly mentioning public opinion?

In order to determine the degree to which the inclusion of operationalized forms of public opinion might change the picture, the twenty-nine mentions of either Congress, the news media, or interest groups as major decision factors in the open-ended question were singled out to examine whether or not they represented operationalized forms of public opinion for

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the individuals mentioning them. From this subset of twenty nine responses, fifteen were found to have been made by individuals who operationalized public opinion via at least one of the domestic political factors mentioned (eleven via Congress, four via interest groups, none via the news media). Of these fifteen responses, however, three were made in conjunction with mentions of public opinion in the open-ended question, while, one individual cited both interest groups and Congress as major factors, both of which represented (at least in part) operationalized public opinion for that individual. Thus, by considering the political factors which represent operationalized public opinion, we may identify an additional eleven individuals who considered public opinion, at least in its operationalized form, to be a major decision factor.

It is somewhat difficult, as well, to know what to do with the eleven responses which cited American domestic politics (stated in general terms) as a major factor in decision making. Presumably, mentions of domestic politics could include a public opinion component. A follow-up question helps to shed more light light on this, however. All respondents were asked at a later point in the interview to identify which domestic political factors were most important to them, and up to three responses per individual were coded. Of the eleven who had cited domestic politics (generally) as a major factor in the initial open-ended question, only four subsequently cited public opinion as a major domestic political factor.

By way of summary, in the most restrictive interpretation of the open-ended responses on major foreign policy decision factors, only nine of sixty seven respondents spontaneously cited public opinion as a major factor. If, however, we add to this those who did not cite public opinion specifically, but who did cite factors which they subsequently identified as operationalizations

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of public opinion, a further eleven respondents can be added to those who consider public opinion in some form as a major factor in their decisions and recommendations. In the least restrictive interpretation of responses, we may also add four more individuals who cited domestic politics as a major factor, and who subsequently cited public opinion as a major element within domestic politics. Thus, we may say that no fewer than nine and perhaps as many as twenty four of sixty seven officials spontaneously cited public opinion as a major decision factor.

Relative importance of public opinion as a decision factor: Prompted responses. Another means of assessing the relative importance of public opinion as a decision factor was to ask individuals at what stage in the decision process they typically take public opinion into account. As seen in Table 7-3 (following page), those who unconditionally say they either never factor public opinion into their decisions or consider it a minor factor make up about 27% of the sample. As with several other questions, the public salience of an individual's issues plays a major role here.

Table 7-3: Frequencies of Responses to - "At what stage in decision is public opinion factored in?"

	Frequency	Percent
Never factored in; very low priority	8	13
Secondary factor; determine best policy option first	9	14
Often secondary factor unless adverse public reaction likely	6	9
High priority factor on major or salient issues, otherwise secondary	4	6
First cut; always a factor; delimiting constraint	37	58
	64	100

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As one respondent stated,

> The attitude of the public does not play in many of the things we do, simply because many of the things we do are legitimately not going to be made public.

Some respondents, however, stated that criteria of "national interests" and "best policy first" should be overriding, and that public opinion should only be a factor in tactical decisions about how to implement a policy. As one senior deputy assistant secretary put it,

> You determine what you feel the best policy should be. You really have to look at it, analyze it, and decide where it is, and then look at public opinion and decide I do or I don't have a problem. If you do, then that's another problem you have to solve. You have to explain it - explain why its good, and why you're doing it, and what its all about. But, yes, it comes after, not before.

A further fifteen percent of those questioned indicated that public opinion was a major factor early in a decision under certain conditions. Again, issue salience was a factor in these conditional responses. The following response from an official, working on arms control issues, cited both public attention to issues and the degree to which decisions were more tactical than strategic.

> On the vast majority of issues I deal with [public opinion] is something that would come later on [in the decision process]. If it's a specific negotiating position, public opinion would rank low. If it's a question of should the U.S. change its position on on-site inspection, there it might be kind of even, because the inspection issue is very important for the public and for Congress, so there you would take [public opinion] very much into account.

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Public opinion as a first-cut factor. In contrast to the foregoing accounts of public opinion as a secondary or conditionally primary factor in decision making, is the sizeable number (58%) of respondents who reported that public opinion was a major, first cut decision in most of their foreign policy decisions and recommendations. As with the responses cited above, the way in which public opinion is factored into a decision often has a great deal to do with the nature of the issues involved. One State Department official, for instance, who dealt with a wide variety of Middle East issues, said the following:

> Public opinion on the area one has some responsibility for has to be cranked into the consideration early on, whatever our policy is. Since I deal with Arab countries, there's an in-built interest here because of our relationship with Israel. So, by definition, when US/Arab relations are under consideration, there is a very-well educated and articulate public interest about it, so its really not a question - there would be no way of surviving without knowing about [public opinion] and dealing with it. Same on terrorism. Same on Iran. These are highly emotion and strongly-held views

Whether or not they were dealing with publicly salient issues, however, the vast majority of those citing public opinion as a major, first-cut consideration cited political feasibility as the major reason why the factoring of public opinion into decisions was desirable. Some respondents saw public opinion in terms of a constraint - public opinion identifies a limited set of politically feasible policy options. The following, for instance, is from an NSC adviser:

> Public opinion plays more of a negative than a positive role. Its more likely that you would try to assess what the reaction would be if something were done. But some things are just unsustainable. They may

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be reasonable things to do, but they wouldn't be politically sustainable and you have to be aware of that.

Another example is the following from an official dealing on southern African issues:

> I think public opinion enters in very early into the process. Its very rare that you get very far along into the foreign policy process without acknowledging that public opinion is going to be a factor. Its not practical to do that. We also sometimes think what, in an ideal world, we would do if we didn't have these kinds of constraints. But in real policy making, public opinion is there at the very outset. It really limits the way you can think about certain problems, because you have to rule out certain options.

Another set of justifications for considering public opinion as a first-cut factor is based upon the need to explain and justify policy to the public after a policy has been implemented. For officials who use such reasoning, policies which cannot be easily explained in a manner which will be both understood and supported by the public should not be adopted. In a sense, these officials consider a policy based (in large part) upon the degree to which it is likely to enhance the public opinion/foreign policy linkage. One NSC official stated this position, citing an interesting decision-making shorthand:

> A guy in our office uses the phrase "Can I explain it to my mother?", which is a surrogate for, "Is this the kind of policy which you can stand up and defend to an ordinary American?" When we say what is best for national security, we tend to think of as it something that you can explain coherently to a non-specialist. And we do, often, sit around and argue, and it's often, "How are you going to stand up and tell the American people that this is important but you can't tell them why?", or "I can explain that;

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that's coherent." So in that sense, I think that it's a belief that if I couldn't explain the policy to a group of competent, non-specialist American citizens, then maybe the policy is all screwed up.

Discussion: Public opinion as a decision factor. The need for public support for a policy under consideration is a widely acknowledged one, as reflected in the quotations above. The importance of this public support criterion in relation to other factors is somewhat difficult to assess. As was seen in responses to the open-ended general question, public opinion was rarely a factor which came to the minds of respondents immediately. This was especially the case with regard to explicit and spontaneous mentions of public opinion, where a mere 15% cited it as a major factor. Even when other factors representing either operationalized public opinion or factors with a public opinion element are included in the total of those spontaneously mentioning public opinion as a major decision factor, only 37% of respondents mentioned it in the open-ended item. However, when asked in more specific questions how important public opinion was, nearly two-thirds assigned some importance to it, while 58% identified public opinion as a "first-cut" factor in decisions.

What can be made of these mixed results? First, it is clear that they reinforce the previous finding in this dissertation that there exists a widespread ethic regarding the need for public support (or at least public acquiescence) for foreign policies. A majority of respondents (58%) thought that the likelihood of such public support should be a major factor in all decisions, while an even larger number supported public opinion as a first-cut factor in highly salient issues (64%). However they may express it, most of the officials interviewed for this study expressed the need to consider public

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opinion in making foreign policy decisions. This shared attitude is well summarized in the following statement by a senior Middle East specialist:

> People who end up being frustrated because domestic considerations constrain their ability to do certain things are dealing in an unreal world. We're a democracy; the public does know about things; Congress has attitudes on these questions, and any time you don't factor those considerations into your determination of which policy course to follow, you're moving off into a realm of unreality.

Undoubtedly, however, we must be cautious about accepting the findings of the interview item which asked how important public opinion was to each of the respondents (where 65% said public opinion was at least somewhat or often important to them). That public opinion was not mentioned as a major factor in the initial open-ended question by the large majority of respondents certainly casts doubt upon this result. This result should also cast doubt upon the finding that 58% of officials identified public opinion as a "first-cut" factor in decision making.

Perhaps the safest conclusion to be made about these data is that foreign policy officials see public opinion as a factor which must be taken into account at some point in the decision making process, and that the need for public support of policy makes it an important consideration in that process. The likelihood of public support for a policy might not, however, be among the very first considerations of the typical official. International considerations, which after all are closer to the typical officials' area of expertise, are most likely to be the very first consideration. Indeed, national interest and national security were the first factors mentioned by just over half of the respondents. At some point, however, public opinion will enter the picture, usually as a factor which will serve to eliminate certain options, whether because they

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may not be likely to achieve widespread support, are likely to create too much public controversy, or because it will not be possible to adequately explain them to the public.

Who is more likely to factor public opinion into decisions? While we have found that there is a widespread ethic within the foreign policy bureaucracy that public opinion should be factored into decisions, often at an early stage, there nevertheless do exist certain variables which affect the likelihood that individuals will assign importance to public opinion as a factor in their recommendations and decisions.

The issues with which an individual works do, as was suggested above, play a role in determining the significance of public opinion as a decision factor. Given that public opinion is often assigned importance due to perceptions of political imperatives, it is not surprising to find that greater issue salience predicts that an individual will report that public opinion is more important to him or her. Spontaneous mentions of public opinion in the initial open-ended interview item were, for instance, associated with higher issue salience ($t_b = .209$, $p = .051$), as were responses to the item directly addressing the importance of public opinion ($t_b = .297$, $p = .003$).[2]

As was the case with attitudes toward the public's role in foreign policy (Chapter Three), respondent's reporting of how they approached public opinion were related to the nature (as well as the salience) of the issues they

[2] Bivariate associational statistics, rather than multi-variate regression, will be used in this chapter due to the nature of the relevant dependent variables, all of which are comprised either of ordinal data (as for example responses to the interview item asking respondent to identify in general terms how important public opinion is to their decisions and recommendations), or dichotomous data (as is the case in the open-ended "major factors" item where mention or failure to mention public opinion is the dependent variable).

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dealt with. Again, not surprisingly, issue Cleavage, was related to an individual's attaching greater importance to public opinion in his or her policy role (t_b = .248, p = .036). Clearly, the relationship between issue Salience and issue Cleavage (t_b = ..418, p = .000) may affect the association between Cleavage and the importance of public opinion.[3] Because the dependent variable is an ordinal measure, multivariate analysis of the relationships between these three variables is not possible. As seen in Table 7-4 (following page), however, by controlling for each issue variable, each seems to have its own effect upon the degree of importance which officials assign to public opinion, though issue Salience seems to have a slightly stronger effect.

Interestingly, there is a significant negative relationship between Issue Consensus and the degree of importance assigned to public opinion (t_b = -.219, p = .049).[4] As was noted previously in this chapter, individuals who

Table 7-4: Associations between Importance of Public Opinion in Decisions, and Salience and Cleavage Issue Variables

Association (T_b)between Importance of Public Opinion and Issue Salience Where...	
Respondent's Issue shows No Cleavage	Respondent's Issue shows Cleavage
.367 (p = .008)	.162 (p = .442)
n = 46	n = 19
Association (T_b)between Importance of Public Opinion and Issue Cleavage Where...	
Respondent's Issue shows Low Salience	Respondent's Issue shows High Salience
.307 (p = .051)	-.069 (p = .979)
n = 42	n = 23

Note: Issue Salience has been recoded for the lower half of this table into a dichotomous variable. Salience scores of three or lower are coded as Low Salience; scores of four or five are coded as High Salience.

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[3] Recall from Chapter 3 that Salience is a measure of the degree of public political debate and issue salience during 1988 (when interviews were conducted), and that the Cleavage variable identifies cleavage (i.e. highly controversial) or non-cleavage issues.

[4] Recall from Chapter Three that Consensus is a measure of whether or not public discussion of specific issues was characterized primarily by consensus or agreement.

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work on issues where there was perceived to be widespread public agreement upon policy goals tended to down-play the need to take public opinion into account in most decisions - public support was already assumed, hence there was no need pay a great deal of attention to public attitudes in making specific decisions. It would appear, therefore, that it is on issues which are most likely to engender political controversy - or cleavage - that public opinion is more likely to be factored into decisions. Issues where public opposition is considered unlikely - due to the perception of policy consensus - tend not to be those issues for which officials consider public opinion in specific decisions.

Another issue-related variable of note is economic issues. There is a significant, albeit weak, negative association between those who work on economic issues and spontaneous mentions (in open-ended questions) of public opinion as a major decision factor (t_c = -.114, p = .077). In combination with findings in Chapter Five, this suggests that those who work on international economic issues tend to place less importance on public input, even though they tend to identify the public more in terms of interest groups than in terms of mass (or unmediated) public opinion.

In line with earlier assumptions about the relationship between attitudes and behavior, there is a relationship between the attitudes expressed by individuals (on written questionnaires) and the importance which they assigned to public opinion during interviews. This is seen in relationships between the degree of importance which individuals assign to public opinion and both the Sophistication Index (t_b = .273, p = .011) and the Input Index (t_b = .194, p = .030),[5] suggesting that favorable attitudes toward the public, and

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5 Recall again from Chapter Three that the Sophistication Index measures the sophistication which respondents attribute to the public on foreign policy issues, while the Input Index measures their attitudes on the degree of input which public opinion should have in foreign policy.

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toward the notion of public input, result in officials giving public opinion a greater role in their decision making. There is also an association (of similar magnitude) between those who feel as if public opinion constrains their decisions and the degree of importance assigned to public opinion (t_b = .223, p = .044).

These results may be interpreted in at least two ways. Most obviously, they suggest the validity of the earlier assumption that attitudes do affect policy behavior - that individuals who express more positive attitudes about the public are more likely to assign public opinion a major role in their decisions, and that officials who express the need for a high degree of public input into policy are likely to take such input into account in their decisions. (At the very least, these findings demonstrate consistency between reported beliefs and reported behavior, using different survey instruments at different points in time - see Chapter Two.) However, assuming that these attitudes do affect behavior, we may also note the rather low levels of association between attitudes and reported behavior. Given the rather large number of respondents who attribute importance to public opinion as a factor in their decisions and recommendations, this suggests that there exists a number of individuals in the sample who, even though they expressed attitudes which down-played the desirability of public input into policy, nevertheless attached importance to public opinion as a decision factor in actual practice. This once again reinforces earlier findings about the widespread "political feasibility ethic" - that foreign policy officials, whether they consider public attitudes on foreign policy to be either sophisticated or based upon ignorance, nevertheless feel that consideration of public opinion as a major political factor is necessary in order to ensure the success of a policy. Thus, the associations seen between Sophistication and Input attitudes and the

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importance which officials assign to public opinion in their decisions represent a mixed picture; yes, attitudes do seem to affect (reported) behavior concerning public opinion, yet they do not have as great an effect on policy behavior as the widespread perception - the cultural norm - that public opinion must be considered as a major factor along the road to a successful policy.

A note on operationalization of public opinion. In Chapter Five, it was suggested that an individual's operationalization of public opinion could have an effect upon the degree to which public opinion was factored into subsequent decisions. However, the data examined in this chapter reveal no such relationship. The particular operationalizations of public opinion used by officials do not appear to affect either the importance which they assign to public opinion (as, of course, they operationalize it), or the way in which public opinion is factored into decisions. For example, associations (t_b) between the use of operationalization categories and the importance individuals attributed to public opinion ranged from .043 ($p = .685$) for use of news media, to .156 ($p = .160$) for use of elite sources of opinion. Thus, while different officials are likely to view different "publics" as public opinion, the definition of such publics does not affect whether or not they assign importance to public opinion as a decision factor. Once again, the widespread attitude that public opinion is an important consideration in the creation of feasible policy is seen to hold true across a wide variety of individuals.

Public Opinion as a Policy Constraint

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Implicit in much of the foregoing discussion has been the concept of public opinion as a policy constraint - for many individuals, public opinion has been expressed as a political factor which rules out specific policy options. However, if a constraint is thought of as a factor which prevents officials from carrying out policies which they would otherwise wish to follow, then the term "constraint" does not apply to the majority of officials' feelings about public opinion. The distinction here is a subtle one, having more to do with connotation than explication. In Cohen's (1973) discussion of State Department officials' feelings of constraint, he characterized public opinion constraints in terms of "the impacts and effects of that opinion from the perspective of what it means to their freedom to 'put the pieces together', to fashion initiatives,' to determine the national interest... [Effective constraints] direct officials into policies which run counter to their own preferences" (Cohen 1973:135).

Because the officials interviewed for this study tended to factor public opinion into their decisions at a relatively early stage, public opinion in the present setting can be seen to constrain options - to limit the choices available to officials - without necessarily constraining an official's preferred choice. Because there is such a widespread attitude that public support (or at least acquiescence) is necessary to a successful policy, officials will tend, according to the decision rules they advocate, not to seriously consider options which are likely to run afoul of public opinion. This factoring of public opinion at an early stage, and its implications for attitudes of constraint, are shown in the following excerpt from a desk officer (who worked in a high-salience and cleavage issue area).

> I don't fell inhibited in any sense. I try to anticipate [public opinion]. You don't have a situation where there's sort-of pure policy making at a lower level and then as it moves up the chain of command you have these

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> other things factored into it. In any bureaucracy, if you don't want to be seen, at whatever level, as being naive - as not seeing the big picture - you are remiss if you don't take [public opinion] into consideration.

Thus, a policy option which is in violation of the perceived general rule that public opposition makes a policy unacceptable, will not reach the status of "preferred option" for officials operating under these rules and perceptions.

Public constraints, as they are conceived by most foreign policy officials today, are not expressed in negative terms - that public opinion keeps them from doing what they would otherwise want to do - but in either value-neutral or positive terms, as a factor which makes certain policy alternatives undesirable. That constraints are perceived, but are not thought of in negative terms, was apparent in most interviews when respondents were asked if they felt as if public opinion was a constraint upon them. The following attitude was, for example, typical of many who expressed a feeling of constraint.

> In most cases its the kind of thing that's neither positive nor negative, its just a fact of life... Reality - that the American public does not want something to happen or it does want something to happen; its just the way it is.

Some officials, while recognizing constraint as a factor limiting options, also saw a positive role for such constraints as instruments of policy.

> Public opinion is by definition a parameter... [Am I] constrained in the sense of having to take it into account - yes, certainly. Constrained in the sense of being hemmed in? The answer to that is, yeah, sure, to a degree. I'm director of ______ affairs. Public opinion has been one of the things which accounts for sanctions against ______, and the sanctions are a constraint on American diplomacy. In some respects they're an

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unhelpful constraint, and in other ways its another arrow in my quiver - its something that I can use. When I sit down and I talk to an official from _______, the fact that he knows that I am not only bound by legal sanctions enacted by Congress, whether or not I sympathize with them, as well as the fact that I am powerless to overcome them... that cuts two ways. It arms me and it also weakens me.

By a wide margin, most of the officials who expressed the feeling that public opinion was a constraint on policy, when asked to characterize that constraint, did so in either neutral or positive terms. (See Table 7-5, below).

Table 7-5: Frequency of Officials who Stated that Public Opinion Constrained Policy, and Attitudes Toward Public Opinion Constraints

"Does public opinion constrain you in your foreign policy role?"

	Frequency	Percent
No	16	24
Some; mixed response	2	3
Yes	49	73
	67	100

(Asked of those who responded "some' or "yes" to feeling constrained)
"How do you feel about such constraints? Are they positive or negative?"

	Frequency	Percent of those feeling Constrained	Percent of Total Sample
Negative	7	14	10
Neutral or mixed (volunteered)	18	35	27
Positive	23	45	34
Very Positive (volunteered)	3	5	4
	51	100	75

Finally, it should be noted that not all officials interviewed even felt constrained. Many, usually working in low salience issue areas, did not feel as if there was enough public awareness of their issues for any form of constraint to exist. Some others felt that public support of policy in their areas invalidated the idea that public opinion constrained them. Rather, it helped

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push them in directions which they wanted to go, as shown, for example, in the following statement by an official working on trade issues.

> You can't really say that there's been anything that we wanted to do that we haven't been able to do because of public opinion constraints, but public opinion in the form of political pressure has brought about certain negotiations and made us put more pressure on Japan on trade issues.

Nevertheless, a large majority of respondents did express the opinion that public opinion was a constraint upon policy options, and the large majority of these discussed such constraints in either value-neutral or positive terms.

Influence After the Fact: Responding to Public Opinion

If the foregoing section has painted a rather rosy picture of the degree to which foreign policy officials try to be responsive to public opinion prior to making policy decisions, this section will present a very different image. While officials tend to feel that a good policy is one which takes public opinion into account prior to a final decision, once a policy decision has been made and the policy implemented, officials tend not to be responsive, at least in the short term, to signals from the public which are critical of the decision.

Table 7-6 (following page) shows frequencies of responses to an interview question which asked respondents to describe what their reaction would be to a case where they had just decided upon a policy, which was then being implemented, and which subsequently faced clear opposition from a

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majority of the public.[6] Given the responsiveness to opinion seen in preceding sections, the difference represented in this interview item is remarkable. While sizable majorities of officials consider public opinion as both an important and first-cut decision factor, a mere 9 of 66 (14%) of the same officials stated that they would consider changing a policy in the face of clear opposition to a newly instituted policy.

Table 7-6: Frequency of Responses to Question, How does respondent react if policy decided upon meets public opposition?

How does respondent react to public opposition to policy?	Frequency	Percent
Do nothing/Keep policy same	11	17
Keep policy same, unless long-term opposition, then educate public	1	1
Keep policy same, unless long-term opposition, then change policy	5	8
Try to educate/inform public about policy	25	38
Try to educate/inform, if opposition continues, change policy	15	23
Undertake marginal policy change	1	1
If policy minor, change it; if policy major, educate public	2	3
Reexamine policy; change it if opposing viewpoint has merit	4	6
Be responsive or look for compromise	2	3
	66	100

While there are several variations in answers to this interview item, three basic themes emerge about the appropriate short-term response to public opposition to a policy decision: 1) Don't respond, 2) Respond not by changing policy but by changing public opinion through "educating" the public, and 3) Consider some policy change in response to short-term opposition.

Response to opposition? Do nothing. Is seen in Table 7-6 (above), 17 (26%) of 66 respondents indicated that their short term response to public opposition

[6] Several responses to this question began, interestingly enough, with qualifications along the lines of, "I can't really imagine that happening in my policy area but..."

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would be to not respond to it - to keep the policy the same and not to try to "educate" the public as to the correctness of the policy. Several explanations were offered as to why this was the appropriate course of action. One explanation dealt with a conception of public officials in a delegate role; the government is elected by the people to do what they (the officials) think is best. The following explanation, for example, was given by an assistant secretary (who operationalized public opinion in terms of news media reports):

> My principle interest has been to do what's right and I have often been annoyed by the attention that is being paid to what the media do in this context. My view of it is that we are the people who have been chosen by the people of the United States to make policy, not the media, and its for us to act responsibly and not to be influenced by what the media may have chosen to concentrate on.

Another explanation for resistance to change had to do with the leadership role of the executive branch generally, and the President in particular. That is, policy should not immediately respond to public opposition because to do so would weaken the image of the President as a leader in foreign policy. The following excerpt from an NSC staffer is an example of such an explanation:

> Your first reaction to finding that a decision has opposition is to sit down and convince yourself that you were right and argue that if the President of the United States makes a decision, he cannot be seen to be changing it the first time its unpopular, otherwise you're vacillating and weak.

Finally, there were a few officials who indicated a reluctance to respond in any way to public opposition because of their own self-perception as apolitical experts in their policy area. A senior expert at State, for instance, stated that,

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I'm not consciously influenced by American public opinion. If a poll were taken this afternoon and it turned out that eighty percent of the voting population opposed a policy, I would be more likely to be influenced on that issue by the interested and non-ideological groups I deal with.

As a final word on this group on officials, it should be noted that ten individuals of the seventeen in the group indicated that public opinion was not a factor which was very important to them even prior to decisions. Thus, most of these officials express consistent views in regard to their responsiveness to public opinion. The remaining seven, however, did indicate that consideration of public opinion prior to making a decision was important to them. Thus, for these seven officials, there is a stark difference in their attitudes toward public attitudes prior and subsequent to the implementation of decisions.

Response to opposition? Educate the public. The largest category, by far, of initial responses to public opposition to policy was to "educate" the public as to why the government is undertaking the policy in question. Fifty (or 75%) of sixty seven interview subjects indicated that their initial reaction to opposition would be to attempt to provide information to the public - usually through public affairs campaigns - in the hope that the public could be convinced to support the policy.

Most of the foreign policy officials interviewed demonstrated a remarkable degree of faith in themselves, both individually and collectively, and in the process which produces policy. They expressed a generalized reluctance to change the policies which emerge from the policy process because of this faith; if we (experts) believe that the policy is correct, and if it

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has been approved by the many actors who must sign-off on a policy decision, then there must be good reason to assume that the policy should be implemented until it either is proven obviously incorrect or it becomes politically infeasible. This self-confidence is seen, for example, in the following statement by a senior deputy assistant secretary:

> If you're convinced that the policy is the best policy for the country, then you have to explain why you feel that, and convince people that's the best alternative. When do you change it? I don't think you change it until you're convinced in your own mind that its wrong. Now that may mean that someone decides you're the wrong guy for the job, but if the administration feels strongly, then you go through with it.

Some individuals, as was the case in the preceding section, also expressed the opinion that precipitous changes in policy can convey an image of executive weakness, and therefore public education efforts - not sudden shifts in policy - should be undertaken when opposition is encountered.

Those who express reluctance to change policies in the face of public opposition, however, also tend to operate under the political feasibility ethic - that a foreign policy cannot succeed in the face of long-term public opposition. The solution, therefore, rather than to change policy, is to attempt to change public opinion. As an NSC aide expressed it,

> I think where the policy of government is not in synch with public opinion as such, that the administration does not want to change its policy and what you do in a case like that is you can only be forthright and you have to argue your case. You have to take your case to the American people and try to convince them why you think the government's policy is right - and the president has tried to that in many speeches - so you get into those kind of conflicts and it depends on how

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> strongly you feel about it. If its an issue you don't feel strongly about, well, you can maybe say forget it; its not worth arguing about, but if its something you feel strongly about, like the administration feels about aid to the Contras, then you have to argue your case - there's no alternative.

The vast majority of officials who express the need to change public opinion through "education" are not cynical manipulators. Their faith in themselves and the policy process, however, often convinces them that, if the public had all the information which they had - or if the public simply had a fuller understanding of the reasons why a decision was made in a certain way - then they would, in all likelihood come to support the policy. Indeed, for many, explaining unpopular decisions to the public in order to build support takes on a less of a practical, political tone than one of civic virtue and duty.

> We have a responsibility as part of the administration to explain why we adopt this or that policy. I don't think we're trying to turn the people, but we're trying to provide the information that people don't have.

Failures of policy to gain public support are sometimes seen not as flaws in the policies themselves, but as problems in government's ability to adequately explain them. A public affairs adviser, for instance, expressed the following opinion:

> I think if the public can be convinced that the decision we've made is right for American national interests, they generally will support it. Its when there are too many questions left hanging and the press is asking them [that there are problems]. When they're asking questions its because the thing is not explained well - something is not clear.

Thus for many, reluctance to change policy in reaction to public opinion is a rather long-term attitude. Twenty five (or 38%) of respondents emphasized the need for long-term public education efforts.

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Variations in officials' long-term attitudes about public education and changes in policy do exist, however. For fifteen respondents (23%), for instance, the failure of public education efforts should result in a re-examination of policy. Though their initial response to opposition is to change public opinion, failure to change public attitudes can lead to the consideration of policy change. Considering change, however, does not necessarily mean that change will result, as explained by the following Middle East affairs specialist at State:

> We not only try to be informed about [public opinion], we try to affect it. I mean, this is not a passive operation. The government has a responsibility to explain to the American people why its doing certain things. You have to be willing to go out and meet with groups and explain what you're doing. If you go out and talk on a foreign policy subject and get a lot of hostile questions, that educates you, and you have then to take into account whether or not the policy line you're on is going to be sustainable. Or, in many cases its the right policy line but it means that you're going to have to do a lot better job educating the public as to why you're doing it.

For other officials, however, the failure of public education is itself a symptom of a flawed policy - if public support for a policy cannot be achieved even after an educational effort, then it is unsustainable and therefore flawed. This is seen for example, in this statement by another State Middle East expert:

> If we feel that the policy we've adopted is the correct way to go, consistent with past policy and our interests, then we have a duty to try to explain it to the public to get them to understand it and to accept it. I think that if [opposition] goes on for a long period of time ... then we have to examine again - Are we doing the right thing? If public opinion is strongly

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negative, we have to reevaluate and adjust, because you cannot sustain a policy over the long-term unless you have domestic support. You can do it for a short period of time - there's a grace period - but during that grace period you have to convince Congress and the public that you're right and deserving of their support.

While three-quarters of the subjects of this study favored "public education" in response to public opposition to policy, we would do well to recall (from Chapter Four) their attitudes regarding the manner in which such public affairs campaigns should be carried out. Foreign policy officials who advocate "educating" the public emphasize the dissemination of relatively objective and complete information. (Recall the preference for a *New York Times* approach, as opposed to a *USA Today* approach.) They prefer to sway the public to their side through the persuasiveness of their case, rather than through public diplomacy "packaging" or ideological appeals. Though the line between education and manipulation in this context is undoubtedly a very fine one, the officials interviewed tended to view public education as an effort to build support by imparting to the public an understanding of the facts upon which the policy in question was established. Because they usually have faith that their decisions were good ones, such officials often assume that reasonable people, with all of the facts available, will come to agree with the government's decisions.

Response to opposition? Consider change. The final group of initial responses to public opposition are those which express a willingness to consider changing policy after opposition to a new policy is first seen. (The exact breakdown of responses can be seen in the last four categories of Tables 7-6,

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above.) Only 9 of 66 (14%) of the respondents indicated such a willingness to consider changing policy shortly after the emergence of opposition.

For some of those who consider altering policy in response to short-term opposition, the consideration of such change is conditional. The following deputy assistant secretary, for example, conditioned willingness to change policy upon the degree of political opposition seen and the feasibility of carrying the policy out.

> If something happens and you get a Gallup poll that shows that 58% are against you, 40% are for you, and 2% are undecided... Well, you tend to say, "OK, this is not one that's going to destroy the policy if we try to implement it, or not one that we won't be able to explain to a divided public. But if it was unanimous - outraged - you have to pay attention to that, if only because it creates so much work for you.

Another deputy assistant secretary conditioned willingness to change upon the nature of the opposition seen.

> It depends. Is the public reaction based on knowledge and on an understanding of the issue, or is it based on what you might call surface reaction? If not very well informed and if its a surface reaction and if you think the case for what you want to do is a defensible one, then you do it anyway, even though public opinion seems to show that people have reservations about it. If its a well-informed public opinion that has been crystallized, so that its in a position to bring opposition to bear, then you proceed very carefully.

For a small number of officials, however, reexamination of policy when public opposition is encountered is an immediate response. Though, once again, change is not assumed to be necessary immediately, the important point

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is that altering policy is considered at the outset. The following quote from an East Asian bureau official is an example:

> I suppose we would take a look at what we're doing and try to figure out why the reaction would be what it is, and then on the basis of that determination we might adjust what we're doing or not. I don't know - its a hard question.

It should once again be recalled, however, that officials who react to public opposition first by considering whether or not alterations in policy are desirable are a small minority. The largest number of foreign policy officials, by far, prefer to attempt a sustained "public education" effort before they will consider changing an ongoing policy.

Public Opinion as a Policy Factor: Conclusions and Implications

As we have seen, public attitudes prior and subsequent to foreign policy decisions are treated very differently in the policy process. Prior to the making of a decision, officials tend to adhere to the widely-shared norm within the bureaucracy which emphasizes the need for public support (or lack of public opposition) in order for a policy to be successful. Therefore, officials generally express the feeling that public opinion is, and should be, an important factor at an early stage in their policy deliberations. While it sometimes appears as if officials may overstate their case - that public opinion, though important, is often not one of the first decision factors which comes to their minds - it is nevertheless apparent that public opinion attains significant weight as a factor constraining policy options.

On the other hand, there is a widespread feeling that, having made a policy decision, public opinion should not prompt immediate reconsideration

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of a decision - that precipitous changes in policy are less desirable than carrying out policies which are opposed by the public. Rather than respond to public opposition, at least in the short-term, foreign policy officials therefore emphasize the need to educate the public about the policy in question, in order to build public support. Rather than seeing this as a manipulative strategy, officials tend to see public education as both legitimate and ethical - they are not selling policy, but rather explaining their actions.

Implications: Public opinion as a decision factor. If one considers it desirable for foreign policy decision makers to be cognizant of public opinion when making decisions, then the finding that officials do tend to both factor public opinion into their decisions, and accord it a degree of importance as a decision factor, should be a heartening one. Indeed, we may well consider this a very positive finding to the degree that through such early consideration of the public, the foreign policy process enhances democratic decision making and lessens the possibility that policies will be implemented which are unacceptable to the public.

Beyond this generally pleasant assessment, however, lies a less clear reality, for the perception of public opinion among foreign policy officials is, it will be recalled, very idiosyncratic (Chapter Five). Individuals interpret public opinion through very different patterns of public, private, and institutional communication. Thus, to the degree that policy makers agree on the need to account for public opinion in making decisions, they often do not agree on which forms of public opinion should be taken into account. This implies the possibility of a confused picture of public opinion. Different officials, interpreting public attitudes through different lenses or sets of lenses, may well see very different patterns. In such circumstances, agreeing

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on how to interpret signals from the public, let alone how to tailor policy in accordance with public constraints, may become very difficult. The absence of effective institutional mechanisms for communicating and interpreting public opinion (Chapter Four) makes the factoring of public attitudes into policy at an early stage even more difficult.

What is more, the very same problems in interpreting public opinion which officials in low salience issues express - lack of public awareness of issues, resulting in few signals by which to interpret public attitudes - are often exactly the same difficulties which officials face while in the process of formulating policy, even within the most salient issue areas. Though occasional trial-balloons are floated (as apparently was the case, for example, in the days preceding the raid on Libya in April, 1986), policy decisions usually occur in the absence of public knowledge that a policy change (or a new policy) is forthcoming. Thus, determining what public opinion is prior to the announcement of a new policy becomes problematic. The result is that officials must anticipate - or guess - what public opinion about the decision will be after the pubic learns of it.

That officials do, in fact, resort to "informed guessing" about public reactions to policies was readily acknowledged by the subjects of this study. When asked whether or not they ever tried to anticipate public reactions to policy decisions, 51 (84%) of 61 subjects indicated that they often did try to anticipate public opinion, with 44 (72%) of these respondents indicating that it is was something which they did either very often or always.

The obvious problem with efforts to anticipate public reaction is that such efforts must rely on some combination of prior experience and informed guesswork. Simply put, good data rarely exist for public attitudes on policies which have yet to be instituted. Some officials, through their experience, feel

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as if such informed guessing is a satisfactory means for factoring public opinion into their decisions. One senior East Asian bureau official stated that,

> You get a feel for certain issues - as to what kind of reaction you'll get - when you've been dealing with them long enough, even though on that specific question you may or may not have a sounding of public opinion.

Others, however, readily acknowledge the dangers inherent in such guesswork, as stated by another official in the East Asian bureau:

> I think we all never do quite as well as we think we do in terms of anticipation. I think that's why people are somewhat surprised that what seems very sensible to policy makers really has no resonance within the community. But sure, I think people try, but sometimes one isn't as successful as one would like and what seems like a great idea turns out not to have much public support, and it rather significantly complicates what you're trying to do....

There is an obvious danger, whenever a policy maker is forced to try to anticipate public reaction to a policy, that he or she will guess wrong, and that a policy decision will be unacceptable to the American public. To some extent this danger is tempered by the importance which officials place in being attentive over time to public opinion in their policy areas. However, given the difficulties which many officials express in seeing and/or operationalizing public opinion, and the lack of institutional support which is provided to them, the possibility of guessing wrong and implementing a policy which will - in spite of policy makers' best intentions - meet with public disapproval, remains all too real.

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Implications: Responsiveness at differing times. Given the finding that officials both try to anticipate public reaction to policies under consideration and try to factor such assessments of public reactions into their policy decisions, it is somewhat disturbing to find that foreign policy officials, having made their decisions, are reluctant to consider allowing public opinion to influence policy once it has been implemented. According to the norms of the bureaucratic "sub-culture" we have been examining, policy which fails to adequately account for public opinion is necessarily flawed. By implication, the official who makes a decision based upon an incorrect assessment of public attitudes has not done an adequate job. Yet, reluctance to change policy not only exists, but is widespread, almost as if the public is being blamed for the official's inability to correctly guess how it will react.

There thus exists a logical fallacy in the prevailing set of attitudes which officials express. If, as so many officials stated in interviews, a correct policy must achieve the support - or at the very least the acquiescence - of the American public, then policies which fail to achieve such support must be incorrect. Yet, the self-confidence of both the officials and their policy institutions creates a reluctance to change decisions which have already been made. That such a contradiction exists in the prevailing attitudes of foreign policy officials is not something which they, themselves, appear to realize. They are quite comfortable explaining both why decision makers need to take public opinion into account during decisions, but must not change policy in the face of public refutation of such decisions. Again, the underlying rationale which justifies inclusion of public opinion in decision making is the need for a policy to be politically feasible, not the inherent intellectual value of the public input itself. Reluctance to respond to public opposition is often explained in terms of the need for policy continuity; that responding too

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quickly to the whims of a fickle public can mean confusion about policy and instability in the government's foreign relations. The solution, therefore, to these sometimes contradictory norms is not to change policy when public opposition is seen, but to change public opinion.

Implications: Public education. The logical disjuncture described above suggests a general problem in the linkage between the public and foreign policy institutions. When the institutions guess incorrectly about how the public will react to its policies, the message of public opposition is usually fed back to the institutions (via the news media, Congress, polls), but the institutions, at least in the short term, usually respond to such feedback only by trying to change public opinion. In general, this suggests that the processes of linkage and feedback are not only multi-dimensional, but highly iterative as well - that it may take several messages from the public to affect change in policies it finds undesirable. Only through sustained opposition will policy makers begin to consider whether their inability to a sell a policy indicates that the policy should be withdrawn.

The tendency toward "public education" also suggests that foreign policy institutions define accountability not in terms of responding to opposition by changing policy. Rather, accountability is defined in terms of the ability to explain a policy in such a manner as to be able to change public opinion, rather than policy. Thus, while foreign policy institutions may attempt to be highly responsive to public opinion at an early stage in the formulation of policy, their definition of accountability, when called to task for apparent errors in one of their self-defined policy goals (namely, making policy which will be supported by the public), centers upon changing not the

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policy itself, but the environment with which the policy has failed to be in accord.

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Section III

Implications and Conclusions

Much of what political science knows (or purports to know) about the role of public opinion within the foreign policy process is based upon research carried out from the late 1940s through the 1970s. From the work of Gabriel Almond (1960) and others (e.g. Rosenau, 1961; Hughes, 1978) public opinion has been categorized as either "inattentive" (i.e. the mass public) or "attentive" (elites, experts, and opinion leaders), with the opinions of "attentives" carrying significantly greater influence than "inattentives." Looking at aggregate data, Robert Weissberg (1976) was unable even to find clear evidence of simple congruence between mass public opinion and foreign policy, let alone evidence of a clear public role in shaping the outcomes of foreign policy decisions.

As was pointed out in Chapter One, however, Bernard Cohen's The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy (1973) has been most important in establishing what, to this point, has been the prevailing conclusion that the foreign policy process is not amenable to input from the public. Based upon State Department interviews in the mid-1960s, Cohen painted a picture of a foreign policy bureaucracy which had negative views both of the public itself and the role of public opinion in the policy process, used largely ad hoc means to perceive such opinion, and displayed non-responsiveness to, and tendencies toward the manipulation of, the public's views.

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Since Cohen's interviews, however, several aspects of the domestic political environment can be seen to have changed. From increasing congressional assertiveness in foreign policy matters (Whalen, 1982; Crabb & Holt, 1989), to changes in attitude among elites (Holsti & Rosenau, 1984) and political leaders (Destler, Gelb & Lake, 1984), to changes within the State Department itself (Rubin, 1985), the environment of foreign policy making has been altered since Cohen's results were first published.

In line with these contextual changes, Chapters Eight and Nine highlight some of the major findings discussed in earlier chapters and address the following questions: In what ways are these findings similar to those found by Cohen and others? How do they differ? What factors or changes in the environment might account for such differences? As will be seen below, some aspects of the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy have remained constant since the late-1960s, but a number of important changes have also come about.

Finally, Chapter Ten synthesizes previous findings and proposes a new model for the examination of the linkages between public opinion, domestic politics, and American foreign policy, taking into account officials' need to assess latent as well as manifest public opinion, and the varying operationalizations of public opinion which officials in the policy process have been seen to utilize. Chapter Ten also summarizes many of the findings of previous chapters and discusses them in the context of public opinion/public policy congruence. Given the findings of this research, how likely is opinion/policy congruence in foreign policy? How might congruence be facilitated, and what are the prospects for the future?

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Chapter 8. Continuity and Change: Officials' Operationalizations of Public Opinion, 1965 to 1988

If there is one constant over the past twenty years of studying the behavior of foreign policy officials in relation to public opinion, it is that they view the public in largely ad hoc terms. Differences in interpretation,therefore, often seem attributable to which type of "public" an official wishes to consider. As Bernard Cohen wrote, "In the very confusion of voices arises the need for officials to pick and choose those whose timbre they like - to 'order' them ultimately according to their own preferences..." (Cohen, 1973:78). This broad picture of officials picking and choosing between public "voices" has been confirmed in the findings of Chapter Five. This aspect of officials' behavior does not appear to have changed over time. As will be seen below, however, differences emerge with regard both to the universe of public "voices" heard by officials, as well as the distribution of influence accorded them. The results presented raise a number of questions about the desirability of using specific operationalizations to represent "public" opinion in foreign policy decisions.

Institutional Assessments of Public Opinion

When Cohen (1973) examined the State Department's Division of Public Studies he found that the assessments of public opinion which it produced were held in widespread disrepute among the officials he interviewed, and that the lack of a viable institutional mechanism for the assessment of opinion left officials "on their own," having to assess public opinion through individual (ad hoc) means. The findings spelled out in Chapter 4 of this work paint a slightly less bleak picture of the utility of the Office of Opinion Analysis and Plans (the institutional successor to the Division of Public Studies) in the State

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Department's assessment of public opinion. Officials today are somewhat more willing to consider poll data useful than they seem to have been in the 1960s.[1]

Nevertheless, it remains true that officials either completely disregard OAP information, or consider it only a very minor element in the public opinion mosaics which they build. In the 1960s, as now, the information conveyed in public opinion memoranda is often thought to be irrelevant and centered on forms of public opinion (editorials and polls) that many officials discount. Bernard Cohen found in the 1960s, as I have found in the late-1980s, that editorials and noted columnists were "mentioned by an astonishingly few officials" as forms of public opinion (Cohen, 1973;110). Yet, the Public Affairs bureau at State continues to produce weekly summaries of editorial opinion (which virtually no one reads) as a means of informing officials about public opinion. The still-large number of officials who distrust opinion polling also weakens the effectiveness of this institutional linkage function.

We have also seen that there was (in the late-1980s) no institutional mechanism whatsoever for assessing public opinion at the National Security Council. Thus, since Cohen examined the issue, there has emerged no system for the analysis and dissemination of information about public attitudes on foreign policy issues. Officials are therefore still largely free agents in the determination of relevant operational sources of external opinion.

[1] This increasing tendency to utilize poll data is discussed at length at a later point in this chapter.

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Operationalizing Public Opinion

Cohen divided the foreign policy official's universe of public opinion into two broad categories. The first, he called "Identifiable" sources of opinion, in which he included "Intimates" (family, friends, and professional colleagues), "Specialists" (notable or important people, foreign policy experts, and quasi-official advisory boards), and "Institutions" (interest groups, the press, and Congress). The second broad category, Cohen called "Faceless or Impersonal" sources of opinion, under which he included mail to the State Department, the audiences encountered on public speaking tours, "demonstrative behavior of one sort or another," and public opinion polls (Cohen, 1973:79-80).

It is somewhat difficult to directly compare Cohen's categories of public opinion with those I have introduced in Chapter Five.[2] Even when broad categories are broken down into specific components (such as polls, Congress, or economic interest groups) it is difficult to compare his results with the data I have already presented.[3] Whereas I attribute the status of "operationalized public opinion" to opinion sources which officials clearly equate with public opinion in response to a specific question, Cohen often attributes equivalent status to instances where officials mention certain sources as "among their outside contacts," or as among groups to which "they are particularly

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[2] My operationalization categories are: Elected Officials (Congress and others), the News Media, Interest Groups, Elite sources (editorials, friends, colleagues, and experts), and Unmediated Public Opinion (calls and letters, speaker feedback, and polls).

[3] At times, the simple mention of a particular opinion source is reported by Cohen as representing a form of meaningful opinion to officials. For instance, in discussing the number of officials who use mail as a source of public opinion information, Cohen states that "two out of every three respondents... in the Department took some cognizance... of public correspondence... in his area " (Cohen, 1973:117). On the other hand, for some categories, only very explicit operationalizations are reported, such as in the following discussion of Congress as a source of public opinion: "Fully 70 percent of the Department officials who were sampled explicitly saw the Congress as having a public opinion role" (Cohen, 1973:114).

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cognizant." For Cohen, any mention of a particular source of external opinion seems to have made it a form of public opinion. I have not made, as will be seen below, such a broad assumption in defining operationalized public opinion.

The remainder of this section will compare and contrast the apparent relevance of different types of external opinion as reported by Cohen and as seen in Chapter Five (and to some extent, Chapter Six), but with the caveats above in mind. By so doing, several differences can be seen which point toward movement away from elite sources of opinion sources since the 1960s, and toward more unmediated sources.

Elected Representatives. As reported in Chapter Five, elected representatives, in particular the Congress, were seen as important operationalizations of public opinion by more officials in my sample (31 of 68, or 46%) than any other category. Cohen, too, found Congress to be a major source and/or conduit of public opinion information for those in his study, reporting an even larger proportion (70%) defining Congress as an operationalized form of public opinion. Though we must be careful not to directly compare these proportions, it is interesting to note that, even prior to Congress' resurgence of foreign policy power in the early 1970s, it was seen as a major source of public opinion on foreign policy matters. This finding is seen not only in Cohen's work, but in others, as well (for instance Melvin Small's (1989) account of public opinion's influence on Vietnam policy).[4] The Congress thus seems to be an ongoing and important source of public opinion to foreign

[4] Small (1989) lists five major sources of public opinion which were relevant to policy makers during the Vietnam War: Congress, Media, Friends, Polls, and Mail.

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policy officials, regardless of the relative institutional power and influence of Congress at a given time.[5]

News Media. Another area of convergence between previous findings and those of this study regards the importance of the news media as an operational source of public opinion. The media appears as the the second major operationalization in Chapter Five, and was mentioned by 29 (43%) of 68 respondents.[6] For those Cohen interviewed in 1965-66, the press seems to have been the most important operational form of public opinion. His findings on the manner in which the media were viewed as opinion sources bears a striking resemblance to those presented earlier in this study. In Cohen's words,

> The press functions as an opinion source for Department officials in two different ways: directly, as an expression of the views of a significant proportion of the political-opinion-bearing population (namely, journalists); indirectly, as a mechanism transmitting the opinions of others.... (Cohen, 1973:107).

The media continue to operationalize public opinion for foreign policy officials in much the same way today.

One obvious area of change over the past twenty years has been the growing importance of television news at the expense of the print media. This change does not, however, appear to have altered the manner in which the news media (generally) are viewed by policy officials, at least with regard to

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[5] Such is not to say, however, that changes in Congress' institutional power have not had other effects in the public opinion/foreign policy relationship, as will be seen in Chapter 9.

[6] Melvin Small (1989) also cites the media as a major source of public opinion in the 1960s and early 1970s.

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their representation of public opinion. This is largely because officials' primary contacts with the news media, both as information consumers and suppliers, continue to be through newspapers and print journalists. Most officials also discount the utility of television news as a source of information.

Interest groups. In general terms, the importance of interest groups between the 1960s and 1980s appears to have been fairly stable. However, when this category is broken down into specific types of interest groups, noticeable changes emerge.

Nineteen of my sixty eight subjects (28%) equated various types of interest groups with operational public opinion. Cohen's results show about one-third "mentioning" ethnic groups, twenty percent "mentioning" right-wing political groups, and one-half having "contact" with economic interest groups (Cohen, 1973:96-104). Of these three group-types mentioned in Cohen's writing, the role of ethnic groups seems to have remained remarkably stable. His description of the role of economic interest groups is also strikingly similar to the results presented in Chapters Five and Six of this dissertation. Both Cohen's and this study describe sizeable proportions of officials who have contact with economic groups, but report that only a fraction of officials actually equate such groups with public opinion, while other officials discuss such groups in the context of a conflict between private and "public" or "national" interests.

Two other types of interest groups may be seen to have changing roles between the 1960s and 1980s. One of these is right-wing political groups, cited by Cohen as important public opinion sources for 20% of his sample. Even beyond such a public opinion role, Cohen saw conservative political groups as a particularly constraining influence upon State Department initiatives.

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Citing, for example, the role of the Committee of One Million after the "fall" of China, he states that,

> The attribution of great influence to the Committee has already become the conventional interpretation; and State Department personnel who never even came close to China policy cite it as an example of the kind of impact the "right wing" can have on foreign policy (Cohen, 1973:97).

Among those interviewed for this study, however, there was no comparably widespread concern with either the political right in general or conservative groups in particular. When asked whether or not there were any political groups whose opinion they tried to be aware of (not necessarily as a form of public opinion), only nine of my sixty seven (13%) subjects cited conservative groups, either specifically or in general. Moreover, such groups were not viewed as impediments to policy, but rather as constituent groups whose support of policy was both desired and expected. This change, naturally, has a great deal to do with the fact that the Reagan administration carried out conservative policies in many areas. Thus, the change in views of conservative groups from opponents (for Cohen's interviews during the Johnson administration) to allies might be expected. However, there was no comparable change in attitudes toward liberal groups as important aspects of public opinion. Cohen made no mention in his results of left-wing groups (except for anti-war demonstrators) as elements of public opinion. Comparably, none of my respondents cited liberal groups as worthy of either much attention or inclusion in the category of operationalized public opinion. Nevertheless, the role of conservative groups as forms of public opinion appears to have both diminished in general importance, and reversed from constraining to supportive opinion.

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One category of interest groups which was mentioned by a number of respondents in my 1988 interviews, but which was not mentioned by Cohen, is human rights groups. This should come as no particular surprise given the emergence and growth of human rights as a foreign policy issue in the 1970s. Indeed many prominent human rights groups did not even exist at the time of Cohen's interviews. Though they were rarely seen as an operationalized form of public opinion, human rights groups were mentioned as important opinion inputs by twenty two of sixty seven (33%) respondents. Such groups, therefore, seem to have made much progress during the past twenty five years in having their views heard within the foreign policy bureaucracy. The acceptance of the views of major human rights groups has also been due to the widespread perception among officials that they are non-ideological and non-partisan voices.

Elite opinion as public opinion. Among the four broad categories which Cohen used to examine how his subjects viewed public opinion, two (Intimates and Specialists) are roughly comparable to the category I have called Elite opinion. It is with these categories that major differences appear between my findings in this study and those reported by Cohen. Cohen indicated that various forms of elite opinion were not only very important to his subjects, but also represented important forms of public opinion for a large proportion of them. For instance, he reported that "nearly one third of the respondents spontaneously and voluntarily cited family and/or friends in and out of the Department as public opinion sources" (Cohen, 1973:80). He also reported that twenty four of forty four (55%) respondents cited academic experts as among their "outside contacts," which he implied established them as public opinion (Cohen 1973:88). Finally, he attributed a great deal of importance to "notables -

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private men of public standing with prior experience in foreign affairs" as sources of public opinion to those inside the State Department (Cohen, 1973:84).

The degree to which elite opinions were cited by officials as operationalized forms of public opinion in my interviews in 1988 is strikingly different from Cohen's assessment of elite opinion. As reported in Chapter Five, a mere eight of sixty eight (12%) respondents mentioned elite opinions as either representative of, or a specific form of, public opinion. Among the elements of elite opinion which I have identified - editorials, friends, colleagues, and experts - Cohen and I both have attributed little importance to editorial opinions (for him as a form of press opinion, for me as a form of elite opinion). Among other specific types of elite opinion, however, major divergences can be seen. Cohen specifies a public opinion role for academics and other "experts" for better than half his respondents, while for only three of my sixty eight subjects is this the case.

It is possible that some of this discrepancy is due to Cohen's coding methods. In his account of the importance of academics, he seems to assume that his respondents equate experts with public opinion simply by virtue of the fact that they mentioned them as among the people "with whom they were in some form of contact" (Cohen, 1973:88). It is difficult to know from this whether a mention of a particular outside contact is, for the official involved, thought of as contact with a form of public opinion, or simply with an opinion other than his or her own. We can begin to see the magnitude of the coding problem which Cohen's apparent assumption (that such outside contact is equivalent to public opinion) by examining data from my interviews. Among the questions asked of my respondents was one which asked them to identify different types of opinion groups or forms of external opinion they try to be aware of. This broad, open-ended question yielded a wide variety of answers,

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including various types of interest groups. One of the larger categories of external opinion mentioned in response to this question was "academics" or "area experts." No fewer than 21 of 67 (31%) mentioned such sources. When asked to operationalize _public opinion_ elsewhere in the interview, however, a mere three officials stated that such experts represented public opinion to them. Thus, while nearly a third of all officials interviewed indicated that they paid attention to the opinions of academics and/or experts in relation to their issues - and indeed, might well be highly influenced by such opinions - it would not be accurate to say that they all considered such attention as a means of discerning public opinion. The large proportion of officials which Cohen cites as looking to _elite_ opinion as a means of assessing _public_ opinion, may therefore be an artifact of how he seems to have interpreted responses.

Even given differences in coding between the two studies, some other divergences regarding elite forms of opinion require further exploration. While my data show a total of two officials who mentioned friends and/or family, and but one who mentioned other government officials, as sources of public opinion, Cohen tells us that, "Nearly one-third of the respondents" in his study "spontaneously and voluntarily cited family and/or friends in and out of the Department as public opinion sources" (Cohen, 1973:80). Here there would appear to be no coding problem. Respondents are specifically reported as having presented family, friends, and colleagues as sources of public opinion, not merely as having been mentioned as people with whom they were in contact. We may therefore take this finding at face value, especially when we compare it to Melvin Small's (1989) listing of public opinion types for the Vietnam-era officials he interviewed (where "friends" is listed co-equally with media, Congress, polls, and mail).

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The officials interviewed in 1988 for this study, on the other hand, seemed to have seen more clear distinctions between public opinion and those with whom they typically had personal contact, such as friends and family. There especially was a clear distinction between what officials often termed "inside the beltway" (Washington area) opinion, and true "public" opinion. They tended to see those with whom they had the most contact - professional colleagues, Washington area neighbors and family members - as unusually pre-occupied with political matters, and that the opinions of such people were therefore not representative of "true" public opinion. The vast majority of officials, therefore, seemed to make a distinction between elite and public opinion sources. Such is not to say that elite sources of opinion - whether friends, family members, colleagues, or experts - might not have an effect upon their policy behavior. But in the data from this study (and the questions upon which they are based) I have no specific way of assessing such an effect. It is clear from these data, however, that the large majority of foreign policy officials do not think of their contacts with elites as equivalent to public opinion.

Given all of the above, then, it would appear as if there has been a change since the 1960s in the ways officials operationalize public opinion. Such a change becomes more apparent when we examine changes in officials' views toward unmediated forms of public opinion.

Unmediated forms of public opinion. The apparent decrease in the significance which officials attach to elite opinion as a form of public opinion is mirrored by an apparent increase in the degree to which officials look toward certain forms of unmediated public opinion (poll data, audience feedback, and mail and phone calls) as guides to public attitudes on foreign

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policy issues. Cohen's discussion of (what he called) "Faceless or Impersonal" sources of opinion (opinion polls, demonstrations, mail, and speaker feedback), all in all, attributes relatively little importance to these forms of opinion as sources of public opinion.[7] The results of my research, on the other hand, indicate that while unmediated sources of public opinion are not important to as many officials as are the Congress and news media, fully 24 of 68 (40%) of those interviewed in 1988 cited one or more unmediated sources of opinion as representing public opinion to them in their policy roles.

As was the case in earlier sections of this chapter, it is sometimes difficult to look for change over time through comparison to other research. Such is the case with one aspect of unmediated public opinion, namely incoming mail. Both Cohen and Small (1988) attribute some significance to mail received by the White House (for Small's research) and the State Department (for Cohen). However, Small merely states that, for the subjects of his research, mail was one of five important sources of public opinion. Cohen is somewhat more specific in reporting that two thirds of his subjects "took some cognizance... of mail in their area" (Cohen, 1973:117). Once again, we are faced with the dilemma of attributing the title "public opinion" to sources which officials mention as among the external opinions they see or hear. However, Cohen does downplay, if not the importance, at least the quality, of information which officials attain via letters from the public. In this regard, his results are similar to my own. Eleven of my sixty eight respondents cited either letters or phone calls from members of the public as among their sources of public opinion information, but none seemed to attach a great deal

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[7] Indeed, it sometimes seems as if Cohen does not want to find such sources to be important, as indicated by the pejorative title attached to the category and by sections of his conclusions which call for greater elite input into policy.

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of significance to them. Again, however, direct comparison over time regarding the importance of incoming mail is difficult.

The other types of opinion falling within Cohen's "Faceless or Impersonal" category are more readily compared to the data in Chapter Five. One type is quite easily compared - demonstrations. For obvious, time-bound reasons, this type of opinion was not a factor for the officials I interviewed in 1988. While a few officials made references to demonstrations on such issues as South Africa or the nuclear freeze movement, none included such activities in their lists of operationalized public opinion, nor did they tend to see such activities as representative of anything other than the opinions of a small, ideologically committed minority. Cohen's findings include the report that "a half-dozen" officials in 1965 and 1966 cited demonstrations and other Vietnam War protest activities as salient forms of public opinion. For Small, examining a wider period from 1965 to 1973, such demonstrations take on a greater significance. The comparison here is simple and straight-forward: For highly salient issues, during specific time periods, large-scale demonstrations can be seen as representative of a form of public opinion. It would seem that once such issues fall away, however, demonstrations as a form of opinion tend to lose their significance as vehicles for the transmission of public opinion to policy officials.[8]

It is also possible to compare the findings of Chapter Five with Cohen's assessments of speaker feedback and opinion polls as operationalizations of public opinion. Most of Cohen's respondents in one way or another mentioned public speaking as a useful means of public contact, while a smaller number

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8 Another obvious implication from this is also that only the largest and most sustained protest activities either affect policy or are taken seriously by policy makers.

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(two fifths by his count) explicitly cited feedback from audiences and groups which they occasionally spoke to as a useful public opinion source (Cohen, 1973:121). While a large number of my respondents also mentioned public speaking in terms of contact with the outside audiences, only five (7%) equated the feedback acquired through speaking engagements with operationalized public opinion. These results suggest a marked change in the utility of public speaking as a means for officials to gauge public attitudes on foreign policy issues. To be sure, many still find the Department's public speaking program to be a useful means of public contact. For some, this is a means by which to "sell" policy, however. For others, public speaking is seen as a vehicle by which to assess a segment of attentive or elite - not public - opinion. Finally, and quite simply, even though many officials view public speaking as an interesting way to meet people "outside the beltway," other forms of public opinion seem to have become more salient.

The source of public opinion which seems to have gained the most since the 1960s in the eyes of foreign policy officials is public opinion polling. Cohen reported nearly universal contempt for polling, both as a methodological enterprise, and as a means for assessing public opinion on foreign policy issues - "Only one official in my sample paid serious attention to polls" (Cohen, 1973:123). In some respects, the findings I have presented in Chapter Five are not all that different - the large majority of officials I interviewed did not mention polls as one of their operational sources of public opinion, and a large number of these went out of their way to explain why they did not consider polls to be a useful source. Nevertheless, fifteen officials (22%) did cite opinion polls as among their operational public opinion sources. While public opinion polls are far from the most often cited source (Congress,

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the news media, and interest groups were all mentioned more often), this result represents a major difference between Cohen's findings and my own.

The large increase in acceptance of poll data as a source of public opinion accounts for much of the overall trend away from elite sources of opinion and toward unmediated sources. While other authors have found poll data to be important sources either of public opinion or political guidance in the making of foreign policy decisions at the highest levels of the White House (see e.g. Small, 1989; Destler, Gelb, and Lake, 1984), these results show an attention to poll data at lower levels of the foreign policy bureaucracy that had not previously been supposed. While this result does need to be qualified - most officials still either disdain polls or find them irrelevant - the data suggest a trend toward increasing use of polls in the evaluation of public attitudes on foreign policy issues.

Explaining Changes in Operationalization Tendencies

The factor which appears to underlie the foreign policy bureaucracy's movement away from elite forms of opinion and toward public opinion polls is cohort, or generational, change within the bureaucracy itself. While the data reveal no discernable trends concerning officials who fit into the "elite opinion" operationalization category, a cohort effect among those who cite opinion polls as operational forms of public opinion can be seen in Table 8-1 (following page). Though the total proportion of those who cite polls remains small, among the most junior officials, there is a significantly higher proportion of those reporting the use of poll data in their assessments of public opinion than is the case for more senior officials.

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Considering Cohen's findings (that only one out of about fifty officials interviewed took polls seriously), we cannot easily attribute this relationship

Table 8-1: Operationalization of Public Opinion via Opinion Polls, by Time Spent in Government

	Does not Cite Polls as Opinion Operationalization		Cites Polls as Opinion Operationalization	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Time in Government				
10 years or less	10	20	7	50
11 to 15 years	12	24	2	14
16 to 20 years	7	14	3	21
21 to 25 years	8	16	1	7
26 years or more	14	27	1	7
	51	101 *	14	99 *

n = 65
$t_b = -.250$, $p = .029$
* - Total does not equal 100% due to rounding.

to a factor inherent in either youth or inexperience and assume that junior officials, with age and experience, eventually move away from polls as a source of information. If this were the case, Cohen too would have found younger officials inclined toward poll data; in fact, he found virtually no one so inclined. It is also plausible to rule out the possibility that the aggregate movement toward opinion polls is merely the result of the increasing frequency with which polls have been carried out over the past decade. If it were simply a matter of the availability of information, we would expect all officials, regardless of experience levels, to take advantage of it. Rather, this trend appears to be both relatively new and to be based upon the entry of a new generation of officials who are less inclined toward distrust of poll data than their seniors.

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The willingness of the least experienced foreign policy officials to consider polls as operational forms of public opinion may plausibly stem from either of two sources. One may be related to the growing frequency and media reportage of poll results. For these younger officials, public opinion polls may be an accepted aspect of the political environment. In other words, having politically "grown-up" in an environment where polls were common, such officials may be less suspicious of them than their seniors.

Alternatively, the changing demographic bases of Foreign Service Officer recruitment may also have played a role in the tendency of junior officials to look toward polls of mass public opinion rather than elite opinion. The Foreign Service, once considered a bastion of eastern elitism, has broadened in recent decades (as a result of conscious government policy) to include more minorities, women, and non-Ivy League graduates. A mid-career entry program has also fostered the development of a group of junior (though not necessarily young) officials with extensive professional experience outside of the Foreign Service (Rubin, 1985). Thus, as the profile of the foreign policy bureaucracy has itself become somewhat less "elite," so too might its views toward public opinion have become less focused upon elite input than upon opinion sources reflecting mass public opinion.

Given the data I have available it is impossible to determine exactly why the most junior cohort of foreign policy officials are more inclined toward opinion polls than their seniors. The presence of such a junior cohort which is favorably inclined toward opinion polls, however, suggests that, as more senior officials retire, the aggregate picture regarding the operationalization of public opinion may change, with polls becoming more important as cohort replacement proceeds.

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This explanation of change with regard to the use of poll data does not, however, explain the decreased importance of elite sources as a form of public opinion. As has been pointed out previously, there are no statistical cues which point toward an explanation of why some officials do or do not consider elite opinion as the operational equivalent of public opinion. Even given the cohort results seen with regard to the use of poll data, there is no relationship between, age, seniority, or rank, and elite operationalizations of opinion. We are thus left merely with speculative explanations.

One explanation is simply that what appears to be change is merely coding or interpretational error resulting from coding differences between this and Cohen's research. Even discounting vastly different statistical frequencies in the attribution of elite operationalization, Cohen's general description of the importance which the officials he interviewed placed upon elite sources is at great variance with both the hard data and the impressions my respondents left me with. What is more, in other works, personal contacts with friends, colleagues, and experts, seem to have been important sources of "public" input at the time of Cohen's research (Small, 1989; Destler et al, 1984). Indeed, in support of my finding of change, Destler et al (1984) have lamented at length upon what they perceive as a recent (and negative) trend toward increasing attention toward polls and electoral considerations among high level foreign policy officials, at the expense of more "informed" elite sources.

If there has indeed been a movement of foreign policy officials away from the use of elite sources as operationalizations of public opinion, how is that to be explained? We may speculate that the breakdown of consensus and polarization of elite foreign policy opinions (described by Holsti and Rosenau, 1984) has resulted in a weakening of elite influence upon government. One might also suppose that the among the "lessons of Vietnam" was the notion

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that elite opinions were not a valid substitute for other forms of public opinion, and that in order to maintain public support, attention needed to be directed toward a broader "public."[9] Finally, with the conscious effort of the State Department to shed its "elitist" image, we might also speculate that officials attitudes have changed and moved toward a greater affinity for mass public input. While all of these (admittedly tentative) explanations have some elements of plausibility, neither my data, nor those of any other research of which I am aware, provides any definitive proof of their validity.

Summary and Implications.

In most aspects, the manner in which foreign policy officials interpret or operationalize public opinion does not appear to have changed over the past two decades. Congress has remained the foremost representative of public opinion for the bureaucracy, followed closely by the news media. Interest groups, also, remain high on the list of representatives of public opinion, though many officials express reservations as to whether or not such groups represent the "public interest."

The areas of change over time seem to be in a movement away from certain forms of elite opinion, such as professional colleagues, area experts, and foreign policy "notables", and toward unmediated, or more mass based, forms of public opinion, most notably in favor of public opinion polls. This finding does not rule out the possibility that elites might - in their own right - be important policy inputs. Rather, it indicates that officials have tended less (over time) to equate elite inputs with public opinion. It also suggests a

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[9] This idea will receive some validation in Chapter 9.

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greater level of input for mass-based forms of opinion, even if the information conveyed to officials is not as clearly articulated as other public opinion operationalizations. This trend, moreover, is likely to continue as it appears that cohort replacement has played an important role, with junior officials being the most likely to view polls as useful public opinion sources. For better or worse, therefore, polls are likely to have an increasing impact upon how the bureaucracy perceives public attitudes in the future.

This trend can be seen in several lights. On the positive side, it suggests the possibility of a more truly "democratic" foreign policy, to the extent that policy is informed by the views of a greater number and wider array of people than might have been the case in earlier periods when elites largely defined relevant "public" opinion. The growing policy relevance of polls can also be seen positively for those who, like W. Lance Bennett (1989), have seen the importance of mediating institutions (such as Congress and interest groups) as a means by which to "marginalize" the majorities of mass opinion.

We can also see a number of negative aspects to the movement away from elite sources of opinion and toward unmediated opinion as reported in polls. Such a trend suggests a greater role in the foreign policy process for "inattentive" or "uninformed" public opinion. To the degree that opinion poll respondents bring "non-attitudes" (Converse, 1964) to their answers, or express opinions based upon "moods" rather than reasoning (Almond, 1950), one could well decry this as signalling a movement toward less coherent policy. Indeed, Destler, Gelb, and Lake (1984) have written in such a vein, calling for foreign policy officials to insulate themselves more from the opinions of mass publics and to rely more upon the advice of experts and elites. Growing attention to polls can also be seen as an enhancement of what Benjamin Ginsberg (1986) has described as the "taming" or "capture" of public

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opinion. According to Ginsberg, by giving more emphasis to passive opinion (as expressed in poll data), government officials find it easier to discount the relevance of politically active segments of the public. Indeed, we see elements of this in the reactions of officials (described above) toward demonstrations.

Discussion of the positive and negative implications of a shift from elite opinion toward polls must be qualified, however, by recognition of the limited overall importance of unmediated public opinion relative to operationalized public opinion in the forms of Congress, the news media, and interest groups. Regardless of the positive of negative implications of the use of polls in interpreting public opinion, the fact remains that polls are secondary forms of "public" opinion for foreign policy bureaucrats. Again, to the extent that one values "informed" opinions over less-informed, the continuing importance of Congress and the interest groups might be seen to remain heartening, whereas those who favor more mass-based forms of opinion have reason to be discouraged.

The importance of the press as both a source and reflector of public opinion poses some normative questions as well. Should, for instance, officials rely upon an institution which is itself reliant upon information from their own agencies to faithfully reflect public criticisms of policy? Should media organizations, which are accountable to neither the electorate nor to public institutions, serve the function of public representation? Finally, given the degree to which the news media themselves influence public attitudes, should they also serve as reflectors or representatives of the attitudes they have helped to create? Because all of these questions have been addressed at length by others (e.g. Parenti, 1986; Qualter, 1985; Ginsberg, 1986), I will not address them in depth here. But the findings that I have reported (concerning the continued importance of the media as an operational source of public opinion

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for foreign policy officials) raise difficult questions about whether or not it is, in fact, desirable for such non-public sources of supposedly _public_ opinion to be accorded such a prominent role.

Finally, all of the findings in both this chapter and in Chapter Five highlight the complexity of the very concept of public opinion as it relates to foreign policy. Simple models of the linkage between public opinion and foreign policy which rely solely on one or two types of opinion, such as polls or media coverage, may therefore have significant flaws. These findings also suggest that models of public opinion in the foreign policy area that rely on simple "attentive" and "inattentive" public opinion categorizations - while they might be patently obvious to the outside observer - seem to hold very little practical relevance for the policy officials attempting to work within the decision process. As will be discussed in the concluding chapter (Chapter Ten) of this dissertation, such models of opinion may serve as means by which to describe the types of opinion which are more or less easily "heard" by officials. However, they fail to account for public opinion as it is actually viewed in the policy process.

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Chapter 9. The Public's Role in Foreign Policy: The Lessons of Vietnam?

For several decades the conventional wisdom about the relationship between foreign policy officials (especially Foreign Service Officers) and the American public has been that officials operate in an elitist subculture that is critical and distrustful of the American public. From this has emerged a picture of a foreign policy bureaucracy which seeks to minimize the public's impact upon foreign policy. This image of the bureaucracy's attitudes resulted in part from the statements of prominent members of the foreign policy "elite." George Kennan, for example, wrote that, "... A good deal of our trouble seems to have stemmed from the extent to which the executive has felt itself beholden to short-term trends of public opinion in the country and what we might call the erratic and subjective nature of public reaction to foreign-policy questions" (Kennan 1951:93). In his interviews with foreign policy officials in the mid-1960s, Bernard Cohen (1973) found that Kennan's sentiments were actually rather muted versions of the attitudes of most foreign policy officials.

The results of this study paint a different picture, however. Foreign policy officials are seen to accept and even advocate a significant role for public opinion in foreign policy decisions. The initial sections of this chapter will therefore highlight the differences found between Cohen's work and this study, both in officials' attitudes toward the public, and in the degree to which they accord importance to public opinion as a political variable. As with Chapter 8, the question of change will be addressed and several possible explanations for the changing role of public opinion in the policy process will be explored. Finally, the question of responsiveness will be addressed. As will be seen, the degree and manner of official responsiveness to public opinion does not appear to have undergone change over time - once a policy decision

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has been reached, officials seem to react to public opposition in much the same way as they have for the past two decades.

Attitudes Toward the Public

Among his interview subjects, Bernard Cohen (1973) found a very widespread set of negative evaluations of both the public itself, and of its views and attitudes on foreign policy matters. While most officials' public statements indicated a belief in the inherent value of public opinion and public participation in foreign policy matters, - Cohen called this the "formal doctrine" - private discussion yielded a quite different "institutional norm." In private discussions of public opinion, he found that the "emotional content or affect [was] overwhelmingly negative... even among those officials who have high interest in public contact.... Negative affect is pervasive and is both particularistic and universal...." Cohen thus summed up the feelings of the foreign policy bureaucracy toward public opinion in the following manner:

> Most officials, whose policy involves questions of just this kind, [express] negative sentiment in private. Thus, instead of the norm being something on the meaningless order of "we try to be as responsive to public opinion as possible," we find people all through the Department sharing the idea, if not the exact words, of the Office Director who said, "To hell with public opinion.... We should lead, and not follow."

What foreign policy officials wanted with regard to public opinion was to be free of it - to be accorded "a substantial measure of freedom in the exercise of their professional judgement concerning the national interest" (Cohen, 1973:60-64).

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Cohen's findings from interviews in 1965-6 largely contrast with the findings of (this work's) Chapter Three. While the officials interviewed for this study held largely negative views toward the public's knowledge and sophistication regarding foreign policy matters, many such views were tempered with positive evaluations of the public's policy "instincts" or "common sense". Indeed, the results of the written questionnaire items (Tables 2-2 and 3-1), as well as open-ended evaluations (several of which were excerpted in Chapter Three) showed a wide range of both negative and positive attitudes toward the public. While by-and-large, most officials were critical of the public on several counts (such as lack of attentiveness to foreign affairs), the degree of negative affect found among officials interviewed in 1988 seems to have been less than that described by Cohen.

The difference between these studies regarding attitudes toward the public is one of degree rather than of fundamental conflict. While the attitudes reported by Cohen were "overwhelmingly negative," the attitudes seen in Chapter Three of this study were largely critical of the public's lack of attentiveness, but were often tempered by feelings that the public was capable of expressing meaningful opinions when presented with appropriate information.

The differences seen between Cohen's respondents and those for this study are quite wide with regard to attitudes on the appropriate role for public opinion in the foreign policy process. Cohen attributed the status of "working norm" to the prevailing attitude among officials that public opinion should show nothing "but the most passive, general support functions" (Cohen 1973:62). Among the findings of this study, however, is that there exists a widespread ethic - I have described it as a "norm" within the foreign policy "sub-culture" - that public input into decisions is both necessary and desirable

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in order to assure the ultimate success of the policies which result. (See Chapters Three and Seven.) Far from wishing to be insulated from public opinion, the norm among the officials interviewed for this study echoed the statement of one respondent that, in his opinion, "Anyone who is involved in foreign policy, even at a relatively modest level, ought to bear in mind the state of politics and public opinion."

Accounting for attitude differences: Interview effects. Having seen reported differences in attitude between the 1960s and the 1980s, what are we to make of such differences? Do they demonstrate changes in attitudes among foreign policy officials, or are they simply an artifact of different interviewers, asking non-identical (though similar) questions, and utilizing different methods of analysis? Unfortunately, with interviews separated by over twenty years, it is impossible to test this directly. Even indirect verification of change is difficult in the case of foreign policy officials due to a scarcity of similar studies.

While we cannot entirely rule out the possibility of interviewer/ researcher effects in explaining differences between this study's findings and Cohen's work, I believe that such factors have had a minimal effect in this case. The interviews upon which the two studies were based were conducted in very similar ways; all interviews were private, not for attribution, in-person, and open-ended. Could Cohen's subjects have been more candid with him than mine were with me? While this possibility cannot be ruled out, it does not seem likely. I was often struck by the forthrightness of many of my respondents. (Such openness is evident, as well, from several interview excerpts included in this dissertation.) I do not believe that the positive attitudes toward the public's role in foreign policy which most expressed was

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either superficial or a manifestation of their desire to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear. By their frequent and widespread repetition of the tenets of the "norm" I have described above, it seems clear that this norm not only exists, but is widely shared, even though officials may not always act in perfect accord with it (as seen in Chapter Six and below in this chapter).

Accounting for attitude differences: Cohorts. A common sense explanation about the nature of the differences between attitudes reported by Cohen and those found in this study is that in the twenty-plus years between the two sets of interviews, different officials with different attitudes have moved into positions in the bureaucracy. Younger officials - those who grew up or were in college during the late 1960s and early 1970s - might have entered the bureaucracy with a more tolerant or open set of attitudes about the proper role of public opinion than their more senior colleagues. In other words, the attitudes of the bureaucrats of the 1960s have not changed, but these officials are slowly being replaced by younger ones with different attitudes.

In fact, the data clearly invalidate such a cohort explanation. It should be recalled from Chapter Three (Table 3-3), that among the determinants of Sophistication Ratings,[1] respondent age was significantly associated with attitudes toward the public. However, Chapter Three also showed this relationship to be in the opposite direction from that predicted by a cohort hypothesis; older respondents actually showed more positive attitudes toward the public. Similarly, Chapter Three (Table 3-7) presented data showing that as respondents' years of experience in the government increased, so too did attitudes favoring the public's role in foreign policy. Thus, the notion of

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[1] Recall that Sophistication Ratings measure a respondent's attitudes about the knowledge and sophistication of the public on foreign policy matters.

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cohort change is not supported by the data. Indeed, exactly the opposite relationship exists between age and seniority in government, and attitudes toward the public from that predicted by a cohort hypothesis.[2]

Accounting for attitude differences: Attitude change. A closer look at the data relating respondents' attitudes toward the public, and their age and experience cohorts does, however, yield an interesting pattern which points toward attitude change among a specific seniority cohort as an explanation for the differences between the findings of this study and previous studies. The cohort of officials which seems to have the most favorable attitudes toward the public is that which was in office both during the Vietnam era and at the time Cohen conducted his interviews. The data in the two tables immediately below illustrate these cohort differences.

Table 9-1: Attitudes Toward Public Sophistication, by Years in Government

	Years in Government					
	15 or less (Entered Govt after '72)		16 to 20 (Entered Govt '72 to '68)		21 or more (Entered Govt before '68)	
Sophistication Index Score*	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.0 to 1.6	5	17	2	20	3	13
1.8 to 2.2	11	37	2	20	4	17
2.4 to 2.8	9	30	4	40	9	39
3.0 to 3.4	4	13	2	20	4	17
3.6 to 4.0	1	3	-	-	3	13
	30	100	10	100	23	99 **

$t_b = .174$, $p = .110$

* - The Sophistication Index measures respondents' attitudes toward the knowledge and sophistication of the American public in regard to foreign policy and foreign affairs. Lower scores indicate more negative attitudes toward the public's sophistication in such matters. See Chapter 2 and 3.

** - Total not 100% due to rounding.

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[2] It should also be recalled that the relationships described in this section hold true when all other relevant variables are controlled.

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Table 9-2: Attitudes Toward Role of Public in Foreign Policy (Input Index), by Years in Government

	Years in Government					
	15 or less (Entered Govt after '72)		16 to 20 (Entered Govt '72 to '68)		21 or more (Entered Govt before '68)	
Input Index Score*	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.0 to 2.2	2	6	-	-	1	4
2.4 to 2.8	12	39	5	56	4	17
3.0 to 3.4	12	39	4	44	10	43
3.6 to 4.0	5	16	-	-	8	35
	31	100	9	100	23	99 **

$t_b = .211$, $p = .064$

* - The Input Index measures respondents' attitudes toward the degree of input which the American public should have into foreign policy. Lower scores indicate attitudes favoring a smaller public role. See Chapters 2 and 3.

** - Total not 100% due to rounding.

While the relationships seen in the tables above are not overwhelmingly strong, they do demonstrate that officials who were in the foreign policy bureaucracy at the time of Cohen's research are those whose attitudes tend to be more tolerant of the public and who advocate a greater public role in foreign policy than those who entered the bureaucracy more recently.[3] The most experienced foreign policy officials appear, therefore, to have changed their attitudes regarding the public and its role since the mid-1960s.

How can this change be explained? One might wonder if either mine or Professor Cohen's findings are simply wrong - either that he painted an overly negative picture of officials' attitudes, or that I have presented an overly rosy view. There is evidence that both his assessments and mine are correct and that the attitudes of these officials have changed. Some evidence comes from those interviewed for this study. Several officials volunteered assessments that the foreign policy bureaucracy's attitudes toward the public

[3] These relationships remain significant when rank and issue salience variables are controlled for.

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had changed in recent decades. The following, for example, came from an individual on State's Seventh Floor:

> I think there's a shared understanding among foreign policy officials that [public influence on policy] is legitimate. I think if you discussed these kinds of questions with people in the [State] Department twenty years ago you would get very different answers. I think the Kennan approach to public opinion was much more prevalent twenty years ago than it is today. I think public opinion is much more significant today, whereas in the past it was a much more elitist kind of organization.

Several interview excerpts along similar lines have appeared elsewhere in this dissertation (in Chapters Three and Seven, as well as in this chapter).

Though by no means a perfect source of verification of such attitude change, Aberbach and Rockman (1978) have written on the attitudes of domestic policy bureaucrats during the early 1970s. Their results show that attitudes of federal bureaucrats toward public participation in policy making at that time were quite varied, with 35% of officials favoring less citizen involvement, and 68% favoring more. One striking result in Aberbach and Rockman's data is that the age of their respondents had no effect upon such attitudes. Cohen never mentions age or seniority as a factor moderating attitudes toward the public; his results show negative attitudes among all officials. Thus it would appear that there is nothing inherent in seniority alone which would account for the attitude differences between age cohorts of those interviewed in 1988.

Given that Aberbach and Rockman's data are not completely comparable to either Cohen's or my own, we can nevertheless hypothesize an evolution in attitudes based upon all three studies. In the mid-1960s, it would appear, most officials discounted the value of public opinion in decision making. The

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political and social shocks of the late-1960s and early 1970s, however, may have shaken such convictions and led many officials to embrace greater public input into the policy process. The lessons of this era appear to have stayed with those in government at the time, as shown in my data for those who entered government prior to 1968. Younger bureaucrats - individuals without the experience of having been in government during the turbulent 1960s - show more signs of having the same negative attitudes toward public input as their seniors had prior to Vietnam. However, some of the lessons of that time may have been passed on to junior officials, as the attitude of younger officials in my interviews appears to have been less negative than those Cohen reported for all officials in the State Department of the mid-1960s. As the Vietnam-era officials retire (or otherwise leave the scene), though, we might well see the aggregate picture of the bureaucracy's attitudes revert, at least partially, to attitudes less favorably inclined toward a public role in foreign policy making.

Public Opinion as a Decision Factor

In the study of political processes, changes of attitude mean little if they do not result in changes of behavior. While my analysis has relied upon officials' reporting of their own behavior rather than actual observation, it has shown that most officials consider it to be both necessary and desirable to factor public opinion into decisions at an early stage and as a major political factor. Indeed, the injunction so often stated in the foreign policy bureaucracy's "subcultural norm" - that foreign policy must be in accord with public opinion - requires awareness of the public opinion variable during all stages of the decision process.

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Cohen, of course, found a different subcultural norm among the officials he interviewed - one stressing the need to be free of public input and constraint. For the most part, he found that public opinion operated solely as constraint upon policy decisions, in the sense that it sometimes caused officials to abandon their true policy preferences (Cohen, 1973:135). Public opinion during the decision making stage, in other words, was a final-cut - not a first-cut - factor. To the extent that it was ever considered as something other than a constraint on preferred policies, public opinion was mainly a problem of implementation: Could the public be made to support the policy (Cohen, 1973:172)?

Cohen did, nevertheless, report some elements of the public support "norm" which I have emphasized above. Reporting that a subset of officials (it is unclear how many) expressed the idea that effective policy must have public support, Cohen wrote that,

> These officials, both in informal conversations and in their customary public rhetoric, pay great attention to "the need for public support," a phrase so common that it begins to look like one of the pillars on which the whole structure of decision making rests - as well it might. But whenever I asked officials what they *meant* in a practical way by "public support," they were nonplussed, unable to answer without reflection (Cohen, 1973:139).

Because officials could not respond with quick and specific answers to such a question - a question which any political scientist would likely also have a difficult time answering quickly - Cohen largely dismissed the importance of statements articulating what I have called the public support "ethic."

In this regard, it is difficult to separate interpretational differences between Cohen and myself from objective differences between sets of

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responses. The reader perhaps will find it useful at this point to stop and consider the question, What, in practical terms, does the term "public support of foreign policy" mean? In fact, this is a question which necessarily requires some reflection. Even for the most expert of academics or policy officials, this is a difficult question for which there should be no quick and simple answer. Contrary to Cohen's interpretation of officials' statements of the "need for public support," I have considered reflective answers and comments on this subject to be indicative of genuine interest and belief in the concept. On the other hand, quick - either rehearsed or off-handed - answers to such a question would, I think, indicate a lack of thought on the topic and lack of seriousness in expressing the need for public support. Thus, I have given significantly more weight to respondents' expressions of this "public support ethic." Whether or not my respondents actually displayed more true belief in such an ethic than those interviewed by Cohen, is therefore difficult to assess.

It is also reasonable to suppose that part of the difference between Cohen's results and mine is due to changing attitudes and behaviors among the foreign policy bureaucracy. Such change has certainly been perceived by those within the bureaucracy. The perception that foreign policy institutions are more amenable to public input, and that public opinion actually does receive a more favorable hearing within such institutions, is clear both from volunteered comments and from an interview item specifically designed to examine such assessments of change. Toward the end of each interview, respondents were asked whether or not they thought public opinion had more, less, or about the same amount of influence in foreign policy as it did twenty years ago. The results of this item are contained in Table 9-3, (next page). From these data, it is clear that the perception of public opinion as a variable

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Table 9-3: Respondents' Assessments of Public Influence in Foreign Policy over Time

"Do you see a trend in the amount of influence which public opinion has had over foreign policy in the past twenty years or so? Do you see it as more important, less important, or about the same?"

	All respondents		Respondents who entered government before 1973	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
A bit/Somewhat less important	4	6	1	3
No trend/ Same amount	20	30	9	27
A bit/Somewhat more important	19	29	9	27
Much more important	23	35	14	42
	66	100	33	99 *

* - Total less than 100% due to rounding.

of increasing importance in foreign policy is a widespread one within the foreign policy bureaucracy.

Table 9-3 also isolates officials who have been in government at least since 1972. While the difference between this group and those who entered service after 1972 on this question are not statistically significant ($t_b = .147$, $p = .212$), we nevertheless see more experienced officials perceiving more public input. Two deputy assistant secretaries, for instance, each volunteered their own opinions about changed attitudes and behavior in the State Department:

> With the old Foreign Service - the old leadership of the State Department - the world view was that you try to set good policy for the U.S. and factor public opinion in second. That has practically ceased to be. There are still a few people around who, like Kennan, think of foreign policy making as a group of wise men doing what is right and then fighting off the ignorant yokels west of Washington, but I really don't know many of these people and none of them are in positions of authority. The people who make policy now are people who have learned. I think they learned the

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hard way. I think probably the Sixties were critical - that if you don't start with public opinion, you're going to end up by losing.

Nobody these days can carry on a sort-of elitist foreign policy; that era has ended, if it ever really existed. You just can't do that.

There are further reasons to suggest that these findings are indicative of a genuine increase in attentiveness to public attitudes among foreign policy officials. Destler, Gelb, and Lake (1984), for instance, have lamented at length about what they perceive to be an increase in sensitivity to public reaction among foreign policy makers. Holsti and Rosenau also assume such a change - at least in attitudes - based upon surveys of foreign policy elites. They find that elites widely agree that among the lessons of Vietnam were that "Limited war cannot be conducted successfully because of constraints imposed by the American political system" (Holsti and Rosenau, 1984:185-191).

In sum, foreign policy officials have apparently become more receptive to public input into foreign policy matters since the mid-1960s. This change has occurred simultaneously with officials' growing desire to factor public opinion into policy decisions at an early stage and as an important political variable. Whatever differences exist as artifacts of the different approaches taken by Cohen and myself, there is little doubt that there have been changes in officials' attitudes, and in reports of their decision making behavior.

Explaining Changes in Attitude and Behavior

If we are to accept the notion that the attitudes and behavior of the foreign policy bureaucracy have changed - that the bureaucracy has become more sensitive to public opinion and public reactions - then we need to explore

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potential explanations for such change. A few potential explanations have already been suggested, but at this point, we will explore four possibilities: 1) Increasing congressional activism; 2) changes in media reporting; 3) the information "revolution"; and 4) the "lessons" of Vietnam. As will be seen below, each explanation has some validity, but with the data available, it is impossible either to single out the major factor, or to rule any one factor out.

Imposed change: Congress. That Congress has become more assertive since the late 1960s in the making of foreign policy is a widely accepted thesis (Crabb and Holt, 1989; Whalen, 1982). In several areas, congressional assertiveness has acted either to change existing presidential foreign policies (such as sanctions in South Africa), or to severely constrain both policy options and the means of policy implementation (such as aid to insurgents in Central America or arms sales in the Middle East). Congressional assertiveness has created strong incentives for foreign policy bureaucrats to be highly sensitive to the opinions and preferences of legislators. Failure to take account of congressional opinions can lead to policies or strategies that could be subverted by public controversy or changed through legislative action. Though a strong congressional role is often resented by foreign policy officials, the necessity of responding to Congress is nevertheless widely accepted. Indeed, as reported by Holsti and Rosenau, another of the elite's "lessons" of Vietnam which has been that, "An effective foreign policy is impossible when the Executive and Congress are unable to cooperate" (Holsti and Rosenau, 1984:61). This has resulted in what Philip Geyelin has described as a "congressional Vietnam syndrome" (Geyelin, 1985).

As we have seen previously (Chapter Five), public opinion and congressional opinion are both conceptually related and often accepted by

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officials as virtually synonymous. Indeed, legislators often seem to see themselves in the role of the public's "voice." As reported by Crabb and Holt, "Legislators often believe that viewpoints expressed in the House and Senate provide the most authoritative expression of public thinking available to the president and his advisers" (Crabb and Holt, 1989:228). Because of Congress' role as a form of "operational" public opinion, increasing congressional assertiveness has dictated that foreign policy officials be more aware of and sensitive to public opinion in several forms. They must be aware of congressional opinions directly, and they must be aware of opinions from wider publics which may, in turn, be reflected in Congress. They must also be attuned to news media reporting which is likely to influence both Congress and public opinion. As Congress' role in foreign policy has increased, so too has the role of public opinion as it is interpreted by both the executive and legislative branches. Thus, in this explanation of change, increasing attentiveness to all forms of public opinion is due neither to changes in officials' attitudes toward the public nor to changes within the public itself, but rather due to changes in the political environment of Washington in the wake of Vietnam and Watergate.

Media reporting and "leaks". In addition to having to contend with an increasingly aggressive Congress, foreign policy officials have, since Vietnam, had to deal with an increasingly aggressive news media. While some tension between the government and the press has always existed (Cohen, 1963), since the advent of the Vietnam era "credibility gap," the media have been perceived by many to be both more critical and less trusting of official information and analysis. There also seems to be an increasing tendency (one perceived often by policy officials themselves) to emphasize policy conflicts

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within the bureaucracy. These dual trends - toward controversy and mistrust of official policy - has also made the media ready recipients of leaked information. As Philip Geyelin has written,

> There was once a tendency to favor the government in the early days [of Vietnam] with a certain amount of trust.... It comes as no surprise that this presumption no longer exists. Here again, there is a [Vietnam] syndrome at work, sometimes to excess, a tendency to assume the worst, to question everything, to seek out soreheads in government and to give them a voice (Geyelin, 1985; 82).

There is often seen to be a reciprocal development as well; officials who are displeased with a policy have become ever-more willing to provide the press with information damaging to that policy. Thus, another of the "lessons" of Vietnam has been "that when the executive branch... pursues a dangerous course of action, it can and should be halted by arousing the other branches of the government, and the public; and this can be done effectively through the news media" (Fromkin and Chace, 1985:728). The desire for officials to leak - based upon policy disagreements - may also be seen as an element in the disintegration of the pre-Vietnam "elite consensus" on foreign policy (Holsti and Rosenau, 1984).

Chapter Six of this dissertation discussed the importance of news leaks. It was reported that there currently exists in the foreign policy bureaucracy a pervasive concern with the possibility of news leaks, and that fear of adverse public reaction to such leaks has acted to constrain discussion of potentially controversial policy options. (Recall, for instance, the case of Panama.) The increase in sensitivity to public reaction which is at the root of the concern about news leaks (along, of course, with matters of security), is thus attributable to dual changes in the media and the bureaucracy. The media

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have tended, since Vietnam, to emphasize controversy in foreign policy making, while also becoming more receptive to leaked information from policy dissidents. Concurrently, as consensus over policy goals has eroded, officials themselves have become both more likely to be dissatisfied with policy, and more likely to attempt to sabotage policy via news leaks. The result has been an increasing sensitivity to adverse public reaction, often, according, to many officials, to the detriment of sound policy making. An office director, for instance, put it this way:

> The execution of foreign policy have been greatly limited by "the right to know." It is unfortunate that the conventional wisdom accepts a need to know that I think is excessive. The willingness of people to breach confidentiality, I think, is not good.

The information "revolution." Another possible explanation for increasing awareness of public opinion is changes in the amount and speed of information. The "information revolution" might have affected the opinion/policy linkage in at least two ways. One might be an increase in the availability of public opinion information to foreign policy officials themselves; it is now easier to "see" public opinion than it once was. The increasing speed and frequency of public opinion polls, for instance, might have an effect in this regard. One State Department official attributed growing importance to public opinion polls using the following example:

> The very fact that a large majority of those polled time after time opposed Central American policy became a political factor in its own right. The fact of those polls... did eventually influence Congress to deny funds to the Contras.

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Given, however, the generally low regard of opinion polls which officials continue to have, an increase in the availability of poll data must be seen to be of limited importance.[4]

A more compelling effect of the "information revolution" which respondents themselves often cited was the change in the way the public itself receives foreign affairs news. Such information is transmitted and received more quickly than in prior decades. Foreign affairs, because of improvements in video technology, seems to have become more exciting and attention grabbing. The mass public, in this hypothesis, is more likely to pay attention and react strongly to foreign affairs than was the case prior to modern "tele-journalism." A desk officer, for instance, saw the television factor in this way:

> Oh, I think [public opinion has] become more important. Just twenty years ago - I guess most people had television twenty years ago, but they didn't have really instantaneous recording of events in the world. I think that that change - I guess it really began with the middle of the Vietnam War - that change has really made public opinion much more of a potent force.

Government officials often have little choice but to respond to potent public reactions to specific events. Christopher Bosso, writing about public reaction to television reporting of the Ethiopian famine in 1984-85, reached much the same conclusion in saying that, "Concerted *public attention* to an issue certainly narrows the range of options a government can take. To do anything *but* send aid [to Ethiopia] would have appeared immoral so long as the media highlighted the story and so long as the public paid attention" (Bosso, 1989:172-3; italics in original).

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[4] See Chapter Eight.

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Moreover, the very technologies which permit the media to send information about the world to the public at high speed, allows them also to report public reaction about world events at lightning speed. Thus, while the media can help to arouse (some would say create) public attention to a given issue, they can also effectively use public reaction to force the issue onto the policy maker's agenda. The bureaucracy must, therefore, often react to quickly-developed public interest with equally speedy policy responses. Thus, according to this hypothesis, there is now a greater-than-ever imperative to be attentive to public opinion.

Another view about increasing public attention to foreign events via television reporting sees such a trend as responsible for improvements in the public's knowledge and interest about the world. Public opinion on such events can be seen to be based upon broader knowledge and awareness of global interdependencies. One senior NSC adviser was particularly affected by such a view:

> I've been in this business for thirty five years and I'd say [public influence is] much greater in the past twenty years. There's greater knowledge out there; people are better educated; there's television. There's a greater understanding of world-wide events. There's still a lot of ignorance, but compared to where we were before, people care more and they feel their interests are involved.

Perceptions of such change in public awareness may, among some officials, have resulted in more favorable attitudes toward the public, and thus a greater willingness to accommodate public attitudes into policy decisions.

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"Shock therapy:" The "lessons" of Vietnam. It is an accepted aspect of foreign policy "conventional wisdom" that the Vietnam experience was a tremendously disturbing one for American foreign policy elites. Various forms of change among such elites have been described by other authors. Holsti and Rosenau (1984), for instance, have characterized Vietnam as an event which destroyed the bipartisan foreign policy consensus of the 1950s, resulting in elite world views which are now polarized between interventionists and non-interventionists.[5] Destler, Gelb, and Lake (1984), on the other hand, have written of profound changes in elites' attitudes and behavior in the making of foreign policy. They, like Holsti and Rosenau, cite ideological polarization and "self-righteousness," but also see such attitudes blended with "self-doubt" (Destler, Gelb, and Lake, 1984:11). While self-doubt might not be the appropriate term for some of the attitudes we are about to examine, at the very least, one of the "lessons" of Vietnam - and another explanation for changed attitudes - is the need for officials to question their own policy assumptions and to look to the external world, i.e. public opinion (variously defined), as a source of confirmation for one's positions.

Many foreign policy officials seem to have a set of beliefs about the Vietnam War which have given concrete meaning to the cultural norm of public support. They view the policy failures of Vietnam in the 1960s as having resulted, at least in part, from an elitist disregard of public doubts about the policy of intervention, followed by intransigence in the face of popular unrest, resulting in open conflict between the executive and legislative branches and, ultimately, a loss of prestige and influence for the foreign policy bureaucracy. The lessons drawn from this experience fall into

[5] Holsti and Rosenau use the terms "Cold War internationalists" and "post-Cold War internationalists."

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at least two groups. One is that executive foreign policy institutions should be "checked" by outside factors, such as Congress and the public. Thus, support from the "outside" has been elevated as a criterion for "correct" policy decisions. One senior deputy assistant (a FSO with many years experience), for example, stated that,

> You can't run a foreign policy that gets too far away from what the public can understand and support, and when you do that, you really get yourself into difficulties. Vietnam is a classic case.

An NSC adviser (also a senior FSO), recalling the "Vietnam experience" insisted that, "You just can't give a blank check" to foreign policy leaders.

A closely related attitude about the "lessons" of Vietnam expresses itself among members of the foreign policy bureaucracy in terms of the need to question one's own policy positions and to be open to criticism from those outside of policy institutions. One can characterize this state of mind in different ways. Destler, Gelb, and Lake (1984) have called it "self-doubt." One might also call it flexibility. The following excerpt from a desk officer, is an example of such an attitude:

> I'm skeptical of the claim that there is all wisdom on the part of government bureaucrats or even the foreign policy elite in setting our agenda or policy. If anything, Vietnam is proof of the fact that the system can make horrendous mistakes.

Another respondent, a veteran of over twenty five years (including a Foreign Service assignment in Vietnam during the 1960s), discussed his strong feelings about the Central American policies on which he was working at the time of our interview. While strongly committed ideologically, he nevertheless expressed doubts about the policy's soundness, based upon

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continuing public and congressional dissent. Citing colleagues who did not share his attitudes toward the public, he went on to state that,

> Most of them seem to believe that we have most of the information and that our judgements should prevail and that if they do, the country will be better off in the long run and the rest of the world will be a better place. That's sort-of the theory of the "best and the brightest" and I think its broken down a number of times. I certainly don't believe it myself and I have also - although I really am a true believer in what we've done in Central America - had grave doubts [about policy there] and I've told people that.

The "lessons" of Vietnam seem to be most deeply felt - not surprisingly - among those who were serving either in the military or the Foreign Service during the War itself. From the destruction of the elite foreign policy consensus, to the surprise of vehement public and elite opposition and its attendant loss of prestige, to the realization that the "best and the brightest" could, in fact, commit major collective mistakes, the experience appears to have had something of a shock effect upon them. Officials in this cohort widely share a sense that foreign policy needs to be more accountable to the public than was the case during the Vietnam era. To some extent the "lessons" have been passed on to their successors within the bureaucracy. However, as the cohort data above (Tables 9-1 and 9-2) show, the actual experience had its most lasting effect upon these now-senior officials.

The cohort data also point to the conclusion that the deterioration of the "bipartisan consensus" does not explain the "self-doubt" described both here and by Destler, Gelb, and Lake. If it did, we would expect to see such attitudes felt equally strongly among younger, as well as older, respondents (which we of course do not see). Rather, the actual experience of Vietnam from within

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the policy apparatus has forged both a concrete set of "lessons" or principles - that foreign policy needs public support - which have, to some extent, been passed on to more junior officials. Finally, the experience also seems to have created an emotional aversion among the most experienced officials to situations, like Vietnam, where policy is not supported by public opinion.

Responsiveness and "Educating" the Public

As we have seen earlier (in Chapter Seven), the officials interviewed for this study show strikingly different reactions toward the accommodation of public attitudes at different stages in the policy process. Prior to a decision, there exists a widely held ethic that public opinion must be taken into account and accommodated where possible. Once a decision has been reached, however, the large majority of officials is reluctant to alter policy. Rather, their reaction is to "educate" the public in order to create the necessary support for policy. Responding to public opposition by actually changing policy is seen virtually as a last resort.

Compared to attitudes which are favorable toward early public input, - attitudes which are, by and large, more positive than they were twenty years ago - attitudes regarding responsiveness to public opposition seem to have been remarkably stable over time. Cohen's description of an "orientation toward public relations" or public "manipulation," at least regarding post-decision consideration of public opinion, holds strikingly true today when discussing the responsiveness of officials toward public pressure for change.

> The public relations perspective runs through almost everything that the Department does and that its officials say. Often, in fact, it is the *basic* public opinion response, in the sense that all the standard phrases about

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> "taking account of" public opinion or being sensitive to it refer not to adaptations in substantive policy but to appropriate adjustments in information policy or procedures (Cohen, 1973:167; italics in original).

Based upon Cohen's discussion of responsiveness, officials in the mid-1960s look very much like those of the late 1980s, in terms both of their reluctance to alter existing policies in the face of public pressure, and of their inclination to respond to such efforts by embarking upon "public diplomacy" or other such efforts to change public opinion.

The continuity of this attitude offers a striking contrast to the changes described earlier in this chapter. Whereas officials generally desire to be more responsive to public opinion in the making of policy than they had been in earlier decades, their attitudes regarding responsiveness after the formulation of policy remains essentially unresponsive. Given the apparent effect - the "lessons" - which the Vietnam era left with those officials who were in office during the War, this reticence is puzzling. While Vietnam appears to have either changed or strengthened the bureaucracy's norm of taking public opinion into account while making decisions, it appears to have had little effect in bringing about similar changes in attitudes toward reaction to public opposition.

The continuing inclination toward public education is also somewhat puzzling given the changes in the American political environment which were examined earlier in this chapter. Such changes would appear to make public "education" efforts - attempts to convince members of the public to support official policy - substantially more difficult. For instance, with the growing reluctance of the news media to carry the government's version of "reality" uncritically, it is ever-more difficult for officials to have the information that they wish to make available to the public transmitted via the

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news media. The Reagan administration's public affairs campaigns in support of its Central America policy are a case in point. When the administration put forth its "White Paper" detailing its reasons for supporting Contra operations in Nicaragua, even the generally pro-administration *Wall Street Journal* publicly questioned the veracity of the White Paper's information (LaFeber, 1983:275). In later years, the White House was unable to convince the television networks to broadcast presidential appeals for military aid to the Contras. What is more, the willingness of the mass public itself to accept and believe government information appears to have changed as a result of Watergate and other national political fiascoes (see e.g. Lipset and Schneider, 1983). The public that once largely trusted the government, now appears much less willing to be convinced that its policies are correct.

Given the "lessons" of Vietnam and changes in the political environment in which officials work, the persistence of "public education" as a widely accepted response to public opinion appears not only to be in conflict with the public support "ethic," but somewhat anachronistic as well. While the effectiveness of public education efforts even prior to Vietnam is certainly open to debate (given the widely documented lack of public attention to foreign affairs during that period; Almond, 1950; Rosenau, 1961), the present political environment seems particularly ill-suited for either "public diplomacy" or the more benign forms of "public education" which officials desire to carry out.

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Changes in the Public's Influence on Foreign Policy (?): The Difficulties of Assessing Public Impact upon Policy

While we have seen a continuing lack of official responsiveness to public opposition on established policies, we have also seen that officials' attitudes regarding public input into policy decisions have undergone considerable change in recent years. The degree to which foreign policy bureaucrats report factoring public opinion into their decisions also has increased. The issue which inevitably arises from these findings, however, is whether or not these changes have had any real impact upon policy: Have the changes described in this chapter actually resulted in greater congruence between public opinion and public policy?

It seems to be the case that, in instances where a particular policy is well known and the government's position has already been established (i.e. after a policy decision), the attitude changes described above have made little or no difference. Where public opposition to foreign policy has been apparent, the executive branch's reactions have been similar over a wide period of time, from Vietnam in 1967, to Contra funding in the mid-1980s, to official visits to China in 1989. Because of the similarity or reactions in such cases of incongruence, a quick glance at history might lead us to believe that attitude changes have made no difference whatsoever. But what of instances of opinion/policy congruence? Have changed attitudes (in favor of public input) resulted in a greater frequency of such cases of congruence as public reactions are factored into policies at an earlier stage?

In many ways, this is a difficult and perhaps impossible question to answer. Typically, political scientists have measured policy/opinion congruence in terms of the correlation between poll data and policy outcomes (e.g. Page and Shapiro, 1983; Monroe, 1979). Such an approach, however,

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leaves the researcher dependent upon existing poll data, which typically center upon highly salient issues, or issues where there is already an apparent incongruity between public opinion and official policy. Such studies cannot even begin to address the problem of the consideration of public opinion in decisions relating to "non-issues," that is, issues which do not emerge onto the public (or the pollsters') agenda (Margolis, 1984). How, are we to determine whether greater or lesser congruence between public opinion and foreign policy exists if we have little or no public opinion data on low salience issues where policy makers are forced to "guess" about public reactions?

One possible approach to this dilemma is to attempt to measure the number of apparent instances of incongruence - to examine how often official decisions create public opposition or controversy. Yet, this approach, too, is less than ideal, because the emergence of such controversies is itself dependent upon the manner in which the public either learns or fails to learn about decisions it might find objectionable. Given the recent increases in news media aggressiveness in reporting policy controversies (see above), we might expect to see an apparently corresponding increase in incongruence, whether or not officials have tried to be more sensitive to public opinion in their decisions. Moreover, even if we could control for changes in the media or the mechanisms by which the media report issues, we would still have no way of examining the vast pool of "unknown" decisions which officials make; decisions which never make it onto the public agenda in any form, and are thus inaccessible to the outside researcher.

Perhaps the greatest problem in determining whether or not changes in officials' attitudes toward public opinion have made any difference in reducing instances of incongruence is the simple problem of proving a

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negative. Without detailed case studies, we cannot even begin to know whether less sensitivity to public opinion would have resulted in either a different decision or the emergence of opinion/policy incongruence.[6] Even if we did have more studies, the idiosyncrasies of individual cases and decisions make generalizing from them to the entire range of foreign policy decisions extremely difficult.

Of what significance, then, are the changes in attitude and reported behavior which have been described above? Despite the difficulties in establishing any clear statistical relationship between changes in officials' approach to public opinion and changes in the degree of congruence between public opinion and policy, this study suggests that there is more sensitivity to public opinion on the part of foreign policy officials since the end of the Vietnam War. Because the need for public support of policy is more widely perceived by officials, and because they have - acting in accord with changing attitudes - come to assign more significance to the potential for public reaction, officials are more likely to avoid incongruities than they were during the 1960s. The degree of this increase is, of course, a matter of speculation, given the difficulties of measuring changes in policy outcomes. Further, even well-intentioned officials can guess incorrectly about what the public will or will not support and thus reach unpopular policy decisions. Taken as a whole, however, these results indicate that the probability that foreign policy officials will reach policy decisions in accord with actual or anticipated public opinion, has increased since the 1960s.

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[6] Even with detailed case studies this is often difficult; see Powlick, 1988.

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Chapter 10. Foreign Policy Officials and Public Opinion

At the beginning of this volume, several research questions were put forth in order to frame the analysis which was to follow. These questions dealt with the attitudes which foreign policy officials held regarding public opinion, the manner in which they approached public opinion in their policy roles, and whether or not the role of public opinion in the foreign policy process had changed along with other aspects of the political environment. This concluding chapter returns to consideration of these basic research issues. Taken together, they will point toward an effort (in the final section of this chapter) to address the broader issue of the role of public opinion in the American foreign policy process.

Attitudes Toward Public Opinion: The Political Feasibility Norm

As was seen in Chapter Three (as well as Chapters Seven and Nine), foreign policy officials display largely critical attitudes toward public opinion, and perceive a lack of public attention to foreign policy issues. The public is seen as largely uninformed about, and uninterested in, foreign policy issues. There is a thus definite tone of negative affect in the statements of most officials when discussing public knowledge of foreign policy issues. Nevertheless, there is also a significant proportion of officials who, while conceding that the American public is not as sophisticated on such issues as they might prefer, see a certain degree of "common sense" in the collective opinions of the citizenry. Even these officials, however, tend to agree with their less optimistic peers that the public should be more interested and informed about foreign policy issues.

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In spite of largely negative feelings about the public's sophistication, the large majority of officials nevertheless favor a significant degree of public input into foreign policy decisions. To some extent, this seeming contradiction may be explained by reference to the different operational definitions of public opinion which officials bring to bear in considering foreign policy. For instance, while they may consider the mass public to be ill-informed, officials also may consider the input of Congress into the foreign policy process to be the operational equivalent of public input. In this way they may be both critical of public opinion in general, while also being amenable to policy input from specific segments of the public.

One of the dominant themes which emerges when discussing officials' attitudes toward public input into foreign policy is what I have called an organizational "norm" or "ethic" of public support. This "norm" is manifested in a widespread notion that policy decisions that fail to be consistent with public opinion are necessarily flawed. As we have seen earlier, the dominant theme in this norm is practicality - public opinion needs to be considered in order to formulate policies which can be successfully implemented.

The finding of a "public support ethic" in the bureaucratic culture is an important one, suggesting that public attitudes can and do affect policy decisions. Certainly, such norms are not wholly determinitive of policy outcomes, as they are neither systematized nor overriding considerations. Moreover, the political appointees who ultimately preside over the policy process do not appear to share this norm, as was seen in Chapter Three. However, the norms of "elite" political culture are "nonetheless important in order to develop an understanding as to how elites will perceive and respond to the 'givens' of their environment," and to establish the boundaries of what officials will consider "acceptable" behavior in the making of policy

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(Rockman, 1976). To be sure, the existence of such a norm does not preclude the possibility that policy decisions can be incongruent with public opinion. Officials can incorrectly anticipate public reactions, or they may decide that other values override public opinion in a particular case. Nevertheless, this sub-cultural norm serves to constrain the options officials are likely to consider.

Institutional Ineffectiveness in Assessing Public Opinion

In Chapter Four, we examined the formal institutions linking public opinion with the foreign policy bureaucracy. For the most part, the functions of these institutions were seen to center upon the flow of information outward from the government to the public. Much less emphasis, however, is placed upon institutionalizing the flow of information from the public to foreign policy officials. The National Security Council (at the end of the Reagan administration) for instance had no inwardly directed institutional channels whatsoever. Such in-flowing information channels as do exist in the State Department are, by and large, considered to be of secondary importance (at best) to most of the consumers of such information. The apparent ineffectiveness of State's Office of Opinion Analysis and Plans as a vehicle for the dissemination of public opinion data throughout the Department was seen (by respondents) to result from several factors, including that Office's reliance upon commercial polling outfits, distrust of polls by many in the bureaucracy, and a lack of relevant information in the memos provided to most officials. This irrelevance was often seen to exist either because the memos conveying the information dealt with only the most salient of issues (which affect relatively small numbers of officials at a given time), or because

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their publication occurred several weeks after the information contained in them could have been of practical use. Thus, without institutional support in their analyses of public opinion, most foreign policy officials are forced to resort to their own methods of gathering information and assessing public opinion.

Ad Hoc Public Opinion Assessment

Foreign policy officials view public opinion through highly individualized lenses and the means by which they gather and assess information about public opinion are largely *ad hoc*. As was seen in Chapter Five, officials operationalize public opinion by making reference to a number of forms of unmediated public opinion and by means of opinions which mediate or represent public opinion. The most common of these operationalizations (each used by about one-half of the respondents in this study) were elected officials (especially the Congress) and the news media. These forms of opinion were seen by many officials to directly reflect public sentiments. They were also often seen to be more informed operationalizations than other, more direct forms of public expression.

Interest groups were also seen to be an important operationalization of public opinion for about one-quarter of the officials in this study. While most officials are aware of the opinions of interest groups relevant to their policy areas, many approach the opinions of such groups with caution. While they recognize them as interested segments of the public, interest groups are often perceived as representing their own - rather than the larger public's - interests and attitudes.

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Unmediated forms of public opinion (polls, letters, phone calls, and speaker feedback) were considered as operational forms of public opinion by over one-third of the respondents in this study. This is itself an interesting finding, given the inconsequential role often assigned to such forms of opinion in other studies of foreign policy making (see Chapter Eight). Moreover, the low frequency (less than 10%) with which officials operationalized public opinion by reference to elites is also very much in contrast to works (such as Bernard Cohen's (1973) and Gabriel Almond's (1960)) which attributed a large public opinion role in foreign policy to "attentive" publics. As the data in Chapters Five and Eight demonstrate, the role of such elites or "attentives" - at least as forms of public opinion - is much less than had been previously supposed.

Because officials need to anticipate potential public reactions to policies or issues about which the public has little, if any, knowledge, they often must resort to *ad hoc* predictions about public opinion. To be sure, on the most salient issues - for example, arms control or Central America - there do exist public attitudes which are relatively easy to measure, whether one does so via polls, the Congress, or by other means. But on most issues, there is a lack of clearly articulated public opinion. In such cases, officials must rely upon their own perceptions of the foreign policy predispositions of the public.

Officials' perceptions of Americans' general foreign policy attitudes are typically built up over several years of experience within the policy process. Nevertheless, these perceptions are subject to a number of flaws. One is that they are often premised upon historically analogous cases where the public supported or failed to support policy. Such analogies, however, may be flawed by different contextual circumstances (May, 1973), by changes in public attitudes over time, or by other factors which may help to predict public

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opinion in one area but not another. Another problem is that most of the typical official's experience has been acquired while working abroad. That is, many officials rely upon what they themselves identify as a certain "feel" or "intuition" for likely public reactions, yet the majority of their professional careers have been spent largely in isolation from the American public. There is thus the very real possibility that even the most psychically-gifted officials may simply guess incorrectly about how the public will react to an incipient policy.

This is where the role of public affairs institutions within the bureaucracy could be of potential use. While I do not suppose that such institutions would be capable of creating precise formulas to help decision makers determine likely public responses to policy options, I submit that the "intuitions" of officials would be more solidly grounded if they had available, and actually used, data and/or analyses on the general principles, norms, and beliefs that underlie Americans' stances on specific foreign policy issues. As we have seen, however, much of the information provided by institutions is of little operational use to most officials.

The lack of solid institutional support leaves officials essentially on their own in the assessment of public attitudes on foreign policy issues, resulting in the creation of individual *ad hoc* mechanisms for assessing public opinion. To some extent, the tremendous variability of individual operationalization patterns is inevitable; individual officials will always feel more or less comfortable emphasizing different forms of "public" opinion. But the simple fact that there is such variability virtually ensures that the anticipation of public reactions will vary between officials.

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Officials' Responsiveness to Public Opinion

The degree to which officials carry seemingly responsive attitudes toward public opinion into actual policy behavior is not entirely clear. As was seen in Chapter Seven, when officials were asked if public opinion is an important consideration in their policy decisions, a large majority indicated not only that it is an important factor, but that it is a "first-cut" factor. However, a much smaller number of the same officials spontaneously mentioned public opinion as a major decision factor without first being prompted. Thus, while public opinion might not be as important a factor to officials as might be inferred from their attitudes favoring a high degree of public input into policy, it does appear as if - while not a factor of the highest order - public opinion is an important factor in policy behavior. While this certainly does not ensure that public sentiments will be reflected in all policy outcomes, it does indicate that officials see themselves and their actions as generally responsive to the public.

In officials' reporting of their policy behavior, we have once again seen the bureaucratic "norm" of public support emphasized. Most foreign policy officials indicated that they favored the consideration of public opinion (usually in the form of trying to anticipate likely public reactions) into decisions at an early stage. This was particularly so for officials who worked on the most salient and/or controversial issues. Interestingly, officials who worked on issues about which there appeared to be substantial public consensus, tended to be significantly less attentive to the public opinion variable. Because they did not consider public opposition in their policy areas to be likely, they felt little need to account for public opinion in their decisions. These results point out an important aspect of the bureaucratic public opinion norm. While the norm emphasizes the need for public support

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of policy, in actual practice, support is typically defined as a lack of opposition. Thus, for many officials, public acquiescence in, or ignorance of, a policy becomes the functional equivalent of public support.

Chapter Seven also pointed out differences in the degree of officials' responsiveness to the public at different times in the policy process. Specifically, while most officials indicated that they felt it important to factor public opinion early in the policy process, perhaps tailoring policy outcomes to public attitudes, they were much less inclined to favor alterations in policy after a decision had been reached. Rather, a large majority of officials, when posed with public opposition to ongoing policy, favor either ignoring or attempting to change public opinion by means of "public education."

At one level, this distinction between pre- and post-decision responsiveness is in accord with the public support norm; accord between the public and policy is the goal, whether it is achieved by changing policy or by changing public opinion. However, it is discordant with another aspect of the stated bureaucratic norm; that a policy which fails to correctly account for public reactions and which does not receive public support is necessarily flawed. In spite of this apparent contradiction, officials try to mitigate the damage of an apparently defective policy by attempting to change public opinion, rather than by adjusting policy. Most of the officials interviewed for this study did not appear to be troubled by matters of propriety in this regard (although a minority did address themselves quite thoughtfully to such issues). Rather, they tended to think and speak in terms of political feasibility: What kind of policies can the public be convinced to support? How long can incongruence between policy and opinion be sustained? Indeed, they often saw public education, not as unresponsive or manipulative, but as a means of upholding the "public support" ethic.

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Foreign Policy and Changes in the Political Environment: A Broadened "Public"

One of the major assumptions upon which this work was based was that changes in the American foreign policy making environment since the 1960s should have resulted in a changed role for public opinion in the foreign policy process. While direct comparisons between officials' attitudes and behavior in different periods is difficult, as Chapters Eight and Nine discussed, foreign policy officials in the late 1980s did appear to approach public opinion differently from officials in the 1960s.

One apparent change in the manner by which officials approach the political environment is centered around the way in which they operationalize public opinion. As was mentioned briefly above, officials in the late 1980s seem to have been much more willing to consider input from the mass public in the form of unmediated opinion than were officials in years past. This was seen particularly in attitudes toward public opinion polls. While the majority of officials interviewed did not think highly of opinion polling, a large minority of (primarily young) officials did consider polls to be an operational form of public opinion. This represents a substantial difference between the results of this research and those of earlier studies (particularly Bernard Cohen's (1973) book), where polls were reported to be largely ignored by those in the foreign policy bureaucracy. Moreover, there appears to have been a corresponding shift away from the use of elite opinion as an operational form of public opinion. While direct comparison across periods is especially difficult in this area, the findings of this study showed much less frequent equation of elite opinion with public opinion than in previous decades.

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While these results in no way suggest that the opinions of various elites are unimportant, or even that they are less important than they once were, they do suggest two further conclusions. One is simply that foreign policy officials associate public opinion more nearly with unmediated (or mass) opinion than was previously thought to be the case. It also suggests, however, that in seeking input into policy decisions, officials are likely to take a more diverse set of opinions into account than in the past. No longer, it would seem, do officials seek out only the opinions of a few private citizens and experts within the foreign policy "establishment" and then claim to have taken "public opinion" into account. The likelihood of a broader public input seems to have increased, and with it, perhaps, the chances for implementing of policies which are likely to be in accord with the tolerances of the general public.

Another reaction by foreign policy officials to changes in the political environment since the 1960s appears to have been the creation of the bureaucratic norm (discussed above) emphasizing the need for public support of policy. The officials of the late 1980s, by their own report and by comparison to officials described in other works, appear to have become much more sensitive to public opinion than officials in previous decades. There are several explanations for this change. One is the increasing assertiveness of the Congress - itself a common operationalization of public opinion - in the foreign policy realm. Another factor is the increasing aggressiveness of the news media in reporting foreign policy. Officials fear negative press coverage of policy, and they are especially concerned about damaging "leaks" of information to the media which might result in the arousal of public opposition. Finally, one of the "lessons" which foreign policy bureaucrats appear to have taken from Vietnam is that policy must not fly in the face of

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public opposition, and that public support is necessary in order to sustain a major policy initiative. Thus, the experience of Vietnam seems to have been the genesis of the "norm" of public support.

In this policy environment, where public support (or at least acquiescence) is thought to be imperative, officials seem to be considerably more concerned with public reaction to policy than they were in prior decades. In short, bureaucrats seem to be much more sensitive to the domestic political feasibility of policy options.

In his writings on the proper relationship between public opinion and democratic government, Walter Lippmann (1922) argued that effective government required a corps of expert, apolitical bureaucrats to advise political leaders on issues of policy governance. Questions of public opinion and political feasibility, he wrote, should be the concern of elected officials, not the bureaucrats who were to advise them. In a similar vein, George Kennan (1951) advocated an expert's role, free from concerns about public opinion, for foreign policy officials.

This dissertation shows foreign policy officials to be very different from those favored by Lippmann and Kennan. Rather than divorcing themselves from domestic political matters, officials conscientiously incorporate matters of American domestic politics (including public opinion) into their recommendations. While such officials certainly continue to see themselves in an "expert" role, they nevertheless feel that political analysis (in the form of anticipating public responses) is a legitimate part of their advisory function. Such is not to say that foreign policy bureaucrats see themselves as intruding into the realm of political decision making. Ultimately, it is acknowledged, foreign policy decisions are legitimately subject to disposition by political leaders, not Foreign Service Officers.

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However, these officials are sensitive to accusations of political naiveté. It would be of no service to political leaders for "experts" to (in the words of one respondent) "shoot up to their superiors completely unrealistic proposals."

Moreover, and perhaps of more concern to bureaucrats, to be viewed as politically naive would serve to isolate them from actual decision making. Such isolation has, in fact, occurred in the past, when State Department officials were seen (rightly or wrongly) to be out of touch with the political realities within which presidents operate, and were thereby often bypassed in the making of foreign policy (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1987; Destler, Gelb, and Lake, 1984; Hersh, 1983). Foreign policy officials are aware of perceptions that their approach to policy is politically unrealistic, and seem, according to these results, to have compensated by incorporating political judgements into the "expert" advice they present.

The imperative felt by bureaucrats in this study (to consider matters of political feasiblity) has been magnified in recent years by changes in the political environment. The growing assertiveness of Congress in the foreign policy realm has increased the likelihood that even low-level decisions or the implementation of policy will fall under congressional "micro-management." The growing pervasiveness of news leaks, as well, has created an imperative for officials to consider likely public reactions to policy recommendations. Whether or not they are ever intended for public disclosure, recommendations made to political leaders without regard to likely public reactions are likely to create considerable embarassment or controversy if they appear in the press. There has thus developed an incentive to account for the political feasibility of policy options at all points in the policy process.

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The Role of Public Opinion in the Foreign Policy Process

Having described a number of specific conclusions, we are now left with a broader question: What is the role of public opinion in the foreign policy process? While the evidence we have before us makes it difficult to show the overall impact of public opinion upon policy outcomes, it does allow for certain statements about public opinion's probable effect upon the process of foreign policy making.

Based largely in the bureaucratic "public support" norm, public opinion is an important factor in the consideration of foreign policy. Officials do not, however, look to public opinion as a source of new policy directions or new ideas. Rather, when framing options for policy decisions, officials look to public opinion as an indicator of their political feasibility. If opinion in a given area is well-known - whether, for instance, through polls or contacts with Congress - then officials are able to evaluate whether or not public support for specific options is likely. Even where public sentiments are not known, however, they must somehow determine the political feasibility of various options. More often than not, therefore, they must attempt to factor public opinion into decisions by anticipating likely public reactions.

To the extent that policy makers are more likely today than in prior years to look toward a diverse set of opinions as representative of public opinion, they should be better able to reach politically feasible decisions. However, as we have also seen, the *ad hoc* processes by which officials assess public opinion - whether latent or articulated - as well as the increasing diversity of operational sources of public opinion, make determinations of political feasibility more difficult.

Because foreign policy bureaucrats avoid seriously considering policies which are likely to encounter public opposition, public opinion serves as a

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deterrent to the adoption of potentially controversial policies. This assertion, by itself, is nothing new. The potential for adverse public opinion always has, and always should have, some deterrent effect upon unpopular policies. The issue here, however, is one of degree. As we have seen previously, the likelihood of public opposition to a policy option - at least according to officials interviewed for this study - is often sufficient to prevent even the consideration of that option for actual implementation. Such policy behavior may be seen as hyper-sensitivity to public opposition, however, resulting in risk-aversive policy behavior. To the extent that such risk aversion prevents political controversies or the adoption of infeasible policies, this may well be a desirable tendency. Such a conservative approach may, however, preclude the adoption of bold or innovative initiatives. While our discussion has centered primarily upon foreign policy bureaucrats, such concerns have been expressed in regard to the policy behavior of both George Bush and his Secretary of State, James Baker. They have, according to this view, been too attentive to polls and the president's popularity. As a result, they have failed to show sufficient leadership, and thus have failed to launch policies appropriate to the present dynamic international climate.[1]

As we have seen, most officials do not have poll data available for the issues upon which they work. Indeed, more often than not, they have only the vaguest notion of public preferences in their area. They do know, however, whether or not there is active opposition to the policies upon which they work. If, as is usually the case, there is no opposition, they may interpret this in two ways: Either the general public actually supports the policy, or it is completely unaware of it. If the operating norms of such officials emphasize

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[1] See, for example, George Will's column in the April 9-15, 1990 *Washington Post National Weekly* for criticism of Bush and Baker's "Policy by Polls."

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the avoidance of public controversy or active opposition, there is therefore little incentive for officials to seek policy change.

At one level, the concern with public opinion we have seen in this study may be regarded as responsive behavior. Most of the time, officials do try to be in accord with public opinion. However, in those (admittedly rare) instances where the government initiates a policy which actually encounters public opposition, they tend to close ranks, defend their decision, and seek to "educate" the public. This is a rather ironic finding. Most of the time, when public opinion is not clearly articulated or known by officials, there is a reluctance to alter policy, in part because of the fear of adverse public reaction. Yet, at precisely those times when public opinion is clearest - when there is active opposition to a policy - officials are reluctant to alter their course.

Most of the time, it appears as if public opinion acts as a significant constraint upon officials in their consideration of policy options. To the extent that they are able to guess correctly about public sentiments - as we have seen, a sometimes-dubious enterprise - officials will eliminate politically risky options from consideration for fear of adverse public reaction. Whether such behavior is overly conservative, or merely prudent, is a question which is difficult to resolve. We should recall, however, that it was not long ago (less than twenty years) that foreign policy officials demonstrated behaviors and attitudes which Bernard Cohen (1973) summarized as, "To hell with public opinion." It seems as if the pendulum may now have swung the other way. While we may not wish to see a return to the era of foreign policy elitism which characterized the 1950s and 1960s (and the politically risky policies it brought about), neither might we wish to see public opinion used as a justification for institutional inertia in foreign policy making.

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Appendix 1: Basic Interview Set/Questions

(Note: Response codings and frequencies appear as Appendix 4).

1. Just to start, and to help me understand your role, could you tell me what your position is and what your responsibilities are in that position?
2. (If not mentioned above) Do you deal with foreign policy in one particular area of the world? (If so) which?
3. (If not mentioned above) Do you deal with foreign policy in any particular kind of issue area, such as military affairs, economics, etc? (If so) which?
4. I would also like to get an idea of your position in regard to the making of policy in your area, that is, what kind of input do you have into policy regarding (country or issue).

   Hypothetical: Lets say there was a military coup in (country) yesterday. What would your role be in helping to decide what the U.S.'s reaction should be to that coup?
5. How long have you held your current position?
6. What was your professional background before coming into the government?
7. What kinds of general political factors are most important to you when you make a policy (recommendation/decision) in the everyday course of your job? Why?
8. How about domestic politics (if omitted from open-ended list above)? How important is this factor to you? Why or why not?

   What particular aspects of the domestic political scene are most important to you?

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9. How about public opinion in particular (if omitted from above questions)? Is public opinion important to you in formulating policy decisions/ recommendations?
10. Is there any particular foreign policy area where you feel domestic politics and public opinion are particularly important?
11. Do you feel that it is important for you as a foreign policy professional to keep informed about domestic politics? Why or why not?
12. (If not mentioned above) How do you gain your knowledge about domestic politics? What kinds of sources do you use to keep informed about domestic politics?
13. When you are involved in a particular policy, how important is news media coverage of that policy to you? (If not important Skip to #18)
14. What kind of news media are you most interested in seeing carry a favorable story about the policy?
15. What form do you most like to see such favorable coverage take?
16. What kind of news media are you most concerned with when they carry a negative story about a policy?
17. What form do you least like to see such negative coverage take?
18. Do you feel that it is important for you as a foreign policy professional to keep informed about public opinion in particular? Why or why not?
19. When you think of the term "public opinion", how do you operationalize this concept? In other words, what, for you, represents public opinion?
20. I am also interested in knowing at what stage in the evolution of a policy do you typically become concerned with public opinion and/or public reaction to a policy. How early in the formation of a policy or recommendation are you likely to take public opinion into account?

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(If necessary) For instance, do you try to anticipate whether the public will react positively to a given policy recommendation or decision you may make?

(If necessary) Or do you simply try to come up with the best policy first, and then worry about public reaction?

21. If I may, I'd like to indulge in another hypothetical situation. Let's say you have taken part in formulating a policy which is in the process of being implemented, when you open the Post one morning and find that a majority of people surveyed in an opinion poll are against the policy. What kind of action would you be inclined to take? (e.g.'s if necessary)
22. What are the most important sources of information you use to gain your knowledge about American public opinion on a given issue? In other words, how do you, personally, gauge public opinion?
23. Do you feel that you are as able to keep abreast of public opinion as much as you would like? Why or why not?
24. (Are you aware/you are obviously aware) that within (State/NSC) there are research memos on public opinion toward foreign policy issues widely available? (If No (Skip to #31 below)
25. Do you personally receive such memos?
26. Do you read them? Why/why not?
27. (If not answered above) How important are such memos to you in assessing public opinion? Why/why not?
28. Do find them more or less informative than other sources which you follow? Why?
29. (If not answered above) How important do you think such memos are to your colleagues in this department?

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30. How about your (boss, office director, assistant secretary, ambassador, etc.)
    - Are you aware of whether or not he/she finds these memos important?
31. (Only if not aware of PA/OAP opinion memos)

    Do you think that you would like to have departmental memos outlining public opinion on specific foreign policy issues available to you, or you do already have enough information on public opinion?
32. Would you read and utilize such memos if they were available to you?
33. Do you feel that public opinion places constraints upon you in the making of foreign policy? Do you think that such constraints are positive or negative influences on policy? Why?
34. In the course of your job here, have you felt especially constrained by public opinions in any particular policy areas or individual cases?
35. Do you ever feel as if your (boss, office director, asst sec, ambassador, etc.) is as concerned, or even more concerned, about domestic politics in general, and public opinion in particular, than you are?
36. Does this place more pressure on you, then, to take domestic politics into account when making recommendations?
37. Are there particular segments within the public at large which you are more or less interested in than others, such as people of any particular political groups? How interested?
38. How about ethnic groups? How interested?
39. How about religious groups? How interested?
40. Business or labor leaders and organizations?
41. Any other types of interest groups?
42. During the past few years, how great an influence do you think public opinion has generally had upon foreign and defense policy?

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43. Do you think it should have had more of an influence or less than this? Why?

44. Do you think that public opinion now has more of an influence, less of an influence, or about the same influence as it had ten years ago? How about twenty? How do you view these trends? Are they for the better? Why or why not?

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Appendix 2: Questionnaire Items

Questionnaires were administered as described in Chapter Two. Respondents were asked to indicate if they strongly agreed, somewhat agreed, somewhat disagreed, or strongly disagreed with each statement.

1. Because members of Congress need to consider a wide range of domestic and foreign policy issues in a short space of time, their judgements on issues of foreign policy are usually not well thought out.
2. Because of the risks involved in the use of military forces abroad, the use of military means to achieve foreign policy goals should be contemplated only where there is a direct security threat to the United States.
3. The United States would be better served if foreign policy officials were less restricted by public opinion and domestic issues.
4. The United States would be better served if foreign policy officials were less restricted by the Congress.
5. In a democracy, it is necessary for government to reflect the will of the people on <u>all</u> specific issues of foreign policy.
6. The public simply does not have the sophistication necessary to make reasonable and rational decisions on foreign policy issues.
7. A primary goal of United States foreign policy should be to maintain the U.S.'s dominance in military power.
8. In an elected government it is often necessary to be aware of public opinion for electoral purposes, but beyond such electoral considerations, public opinion should not affect foreign policy decisions.

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9. For the most part, the major news media cover U.S. foreign policy accurately and fairly.
10. Most people in this country simply don't pay enough attention to current events for their opinions on foreign policy issues to be meaningful.
11. The demonstration and occasional use of military force or power are useful means by which to achieve solutions to foreign policy problems.
12. In a democracy, it is often necessary for public officials to be aware of public opinion for political purposes. But beyond such political factors, public officials should not be greatly concerned with public opinion on questions of foreign policy.
13. In foreign and security policies, there is a need for long-range strategic planning which the public does not grasp.
14. It is often difficult for United States foreign policy officials to deal with officials from other nations because such foreign officials do not fully grasp the complexities of American domestic politics and the difficulties of implementing policy in the United States.
15. Most people in the U.S. have limited attention spans and public sentiments on foreign policy issues are usually short-lived.
16. Leaders and officials of most foreign governments tend be be excessively and unfairly critical of United States foreign policies and actions.
17. On foreign policy problems, most people in the U.S. prefer "quick fixes" and are not able to see the long-term implications of policy decisions.
18. When there is a major threat to national security, policy makers should follow the best course to ensure the national security, even when that course is opposed by a large majority of the public.
19. For most people in the U.S., foreign policy issues are simply too far from their everyday experiences for them to understand such issues.

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20. A primary goal of United States foreign policy should be to maintain (or restore) the U.S.'s dominance in international economic affairs.

21. There is a need for continuity and consistency in American defense and foreign policy that requires that the public's role in influencing such policies be minimized.

22. Although it might be difficult to administer in actual practice, more public input into foreign policy decisions would be good for the U.S.

23. When presented with accurate information, the majority of people in the United States are capable of logical reasoning in national security issues.

24. In the U.S. government, it is often necessary for foreign policy officials to be aware of Congressional opinions and desires because of the Congress' oversight and budgeting roles. Beyond this, however, foreign policy officials should not be greatly concerned with the Congress on foreign policy issues.

Respondents were also asked to answer the following informational questions.

25. Please indicate your approximate age by circling the appropriate response below.

Under 30 years   30 to 39 years   40 to 49 years   50 to 59 years   Over 60 years

26. Please indicate the number of years you have served in a foreign policy or national security department (or agency) in the United States government by circling the appropriate response below.

Under 10 years   10 to 15 years   15 to 20 years   20 to 25 years   Over 25 years

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27. Indicate your current (or highest previous) position ranking (e.g. GS-15, FS-2, executive rank, etc.)

28. Have you been trained as a Foreign Service Officer?
Yes No

29. Please indicate how you identify yourself with regard to the American political parties by marking the appropriate position on the scale below.

|_________|_________|_________|_________|_________|_________|

Strong Democrat	Weak Democrat	Independent But Leaning Democratic	Independent	Independent But Leaning Republican	Weak Republican	Stron; Republican

30. Please indicate on the scale below where you place yourself with regard to political orientation in terms of "liberal" and "conservative". (You may place yourself either on a category, or between categories on this scale.)

|_________|_________|_________|_________|_________|_________

Strong Liberal — Moderate — Strongly Conservativ

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Appendix 3: Issue Salience, Cleavage, and Consensus Variables

The Salience, Cleavage, and Consensus variables are based on the ratings of a panel of four judges, including one current State Department Public Affairs official, one State Legislative Affairs official, a State regional affairs specialist with public affairs experience. The fourth panelist was the author. The salience variable is conceived largely as a means by which to measure issue salience as it is perceived from within the policy making bureaucracy, thus the inclusion of three current State officials. Each official was chosen to participate in this coding panel after having been interviewed as subjects in the study itself. They were selected based upon the broadness of the issues they dealt with (the broader the better), and their exposure and/or awareness of the domestic political scene regarding foreign policy issues. I included myself in the panel for the simple reason that my interviews exposed me to all of the officials and their issues included in this study. Discussing public opinion and domestic political constraints (or lack of them) with these officials gave me a good relative sense of where each fell in terms of domestic salience.

SALIENCE CODING

Panelists rated the salience of each issue in accordance with the following instructions (provided to each).:

> For each (region/issue area/country) listed on the attached coding sheet, please consider the degree to which there was public awareness of each during the calendar year 1988. That is, how much media coverage did each receive and to what degree was there public discussion of it (public being some combination of mass public, interest groups, elites, Congress, etc.).

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Please code each (region/issue area/country) on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the most, salient and 5 the least salient, and write your rating in the column labeled "SALIENCE, (1 to 5)".

After collection of all four sets of ratings, the coding of each issue was done as follows: The four scores were first averaged. Then the single score furthest from the mean (whether higher or lower) was thrown out. If there were two scores equally distant from the mean and in opposite directions, the lower of the two scores was kept and the higher tossed out. The remaining three scores were averaged and rounded to the nearest integer to yield a final score of 1 to 5. If all four panelists gave the same score to an issue, that score became the final score.

As a reliability check of this coding (a check of the impressions of the panelists against a more objective measure), an additional salience measure was devised. This was created by counting the number of stories appearing in the *Washington Post* during the first 11 months of 1988 using the *Washington Post Monthly Index* (December 1988 was not yet available when these data were being compiled). In theory, the number of stories run by a major newspaper such as the Post, indeed the newspaper read daily by all subjects I interviewed, should be a reliable estimate of the newsmedia attention, hence the salience, of a particular issue. One problem with this measure of salience, however, is the problem of crosslisting. While it is relatively simple to count the number of stories on a given country or relatively narrow topic, it is extremely difficult to count the number of stories on a broader issue or region. Most stories in the Post Index are listed by the country involved, rather than the region they are located in. While it would certainly be a simple matter to count the number of stories for all countries in a given region, there would be a great deal of redundancy of stories, as the same item would be listed once for

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each country involved in that item. For instance, a story on the Central American peace process would be listed under all of the countries taking part in that process. Because of such crosslisting problems, only a relatively narrow or easily counted issue topics were rated. Thus, not all issues for which panelists gave ratings were coded in the *Post* salience variable. The salience measure used in all analyses for this study is thus the panelist ratings. The closeness of fit between the panelists ratings and the measurements of salience derived from the *Post* index is best when related to specific countries rather than more general issue topics. However, the association between these two measures is sufficiently strong (r = .720) to lend support to both the reliability and the objective validity of the panelist-based salience variable.

CONSENSUS / CLEAVAGE CODING

Panelists rated the salience of each issue in accordance with the following instructions (provided to each).:

> For each (region/issue area/country) listed on the coding sheet, please consider the degree to which there was general domestic cleavage (disagreement) or consensus over U.S. actions and/or U.S. policy during the calendar year 1988. That is, in the public discussion (in the media, in Congress, among elites, within the public at-large) of each issue, was such discussion generally characterized by political controversy or general agreement regarding U.S. policy. Please mark your response with a simple "X" or check mark under the appropriate column (labeled "CLEAVAGE" and "CONSENSUS"). If you are unable to determine whether public discussion of each (region/issue area/country) was characterized by either cleavage or consensus, whether because there was too little public discussion to be

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able to judge or because there was no clear trend seen in 1988, please mark the column labeled "DON'T KNOW".

After collection of all responses, issues, regions, and countries were coded according to the following decision rules:

# Panelists Issue/Region/Country as characterized by...			
Consensus	Cleavage	No rating/Neither	Result - Issue/ Region/Country coded as...
4	0	0	Consensus
3	0	1	Consensus
3	1	0	Consensus
2	0	2	Consensus
2	1	1	Nothing/neither
2	2	0	Nothing/neither
1	1	2	Nothing/neither
1	2	1	Nothing/neither
1	0	3	Nothing/neither
0	1	3	Nothing/neither
0	2	2	Cleavage
1	3	0	Cleavage
0	3	1	Cleavage
0	4	0	Cleavage

ISSUE AREAS AND SCORES

All of the issues coded and their final scores on both the panelist-based and Washington Post Index salience measures are listed on the following three pages, as well as the codings for both Cleavage and Consensus. It should be noted that there is a much larger number of issues, regions and countries listed and coded than were actually addressed in interviews for the study. I have added a large number of extra issues to this list in order to protect my respondents. The presence of an issue or country on this list does not necessarily indicate that any person or persons dealing with that issue or country were interviewed, merely that they were among the pool of candidates for possible interview.

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Issue Area/Region/Country	Panel Salience Score	*Post* Salience Score (Raw)	Cleavage*	Consensus†
Near East/Middle East (general)	1			X
European affairs (general)	2			X
African affairs (general)	5			
Latin American affairs (general)	3		X	
East Asia & Pacific (general)	3			X
Southern Africa affairs	3		X	
Central American affairs	1		X	
East European affairs	3			X
North & West European affairs	4			
Persian Gulf	1			
Caribbean affairs	4			
Southeast Asian affairs	5			X
Arabian Peninsula affairs	5			
Benelux countries	5			X
Northeast Asian (Japan, Koreas)	2		X	
Arab/Israeli affairs	1		X	
Conventional Arms Control	5	11		
International Environmental policy	3	16		X
International Economic affairs	5			
Nuclear Arms Control	2	254		X
US International Arms Sales	4	187		
US Food Export policy	4	38		X
Human Rights policy (general)	5	99		X
US Trade policy	3	386	X	
International Refugee affairs	4	111		
International Development Assistance	5	115		
International Narcotics matters	2	195		
United Nations affairs	4	201		
International Terrorism	3	419	X	
International Investment policy	4	240	X	
International Energy policy	4	48	X	
International Nuclear Control	3	22		X
Human Rights, Latin America	3			X
Human Rights, Middle East	5			X
Human Rights, Europe	5			X

* - An X indicates that this issue/region/country was coded as showing domestic political cleavage.

† - An X indicates that this issue/region/country was coded as showing domestic political consensus.

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Economic affairs, Asia	3		X	
Economic affairs, Europe	3			
Economic affairs, Latin America	5			
Trade Policy/Controls, East Bloc	5			
NATO Security policy	3			X
Relations with...				
Panama	2	240	X	
Brazil	4	11		
Argentina	5	21		X
Colombia	5	22		
Venezuela	5	2		X
Chile	5	46		X
Cuba	4	54		
Bolivia	5	4		
Antilles Islands	5	3		X
Jamaica	5	2		X
Nicaragua	2	364	X	
West Germany	3	53		X
Poland	4	54		
Italy	5	23		X
Czechoslovakia	5	17		X
Switzerland	5	3		X
Soviet Union	1	461	X	
Austria	5	42		X
Romania	5	2		
France	4	57		X
Norway	5	1		X
Yugoslavia	5	28		X
Greece	5	14		X
Uganda	5	1		X
South Africa	3	211	X	
Burundi	5	14		X
Chad	5	1		X
Ethiopia	4	30		
Zaire	5	4		
Senegal	5	1		X
Ghana	5	1		X
Kenya	5	11		

* - An X indicates that this issue/region/country was coded as showing domestic political cleavage.

† - An X indicates that this issue/region/country was coded as showing domestic political consensus.

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China (People's Republic)	4	45		X
India	5	40		
Malaysia	5	2		X
Thailand	5	13		X
Japan	1	152	X	
South Korea (not including Olympics)	2	91		
Philippines	2	97		X
New Zealand	5	1		X
Vietnam	5	31	X	
Indonesia	5	2		X
Saudi Arabia	4	9	X	
Algeria	5	15		X
Israel	1	725	X	
Lebanon	2	127		
Libya	2	29		X
Syria	4	7		
Iraq	3	324		
Afghanistan	2	309		X
Pakistan	4	112	X	
Kuwait	5	12		

* - An X indicates that this issue/region/country was coded as showing domestic political cleavage.

† - An X indicates that this issue/region/country was coded as showing domestic political consensus.

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Appendix 4: Data Codiugs and Frequencies

NOTE: Variable names are listed all in capitals according to their machine-readable titles. Descriptions of each variables are included where applicable. Fuller details on wording can be seen in Appendices 1 & 2. Response codings are preceded by the frequencies of their occurrence. Frequencies are based upon total numbers of responses from complete sample of 80 respondents; the frequencies and statistics listed within the body of this study often respresent smaller samples based upon selection or exclusion of individuals for specific traits or purposes (see Chapter Two).

ID
Identification number of respondent

AGENCY
Agency of respondent

6 = State AF
9 = State ARA
8 = State EAP
8 = State EUR.
9 = State NEA
1 = State E
6 = State S
1 = State P.
3 = State EB
3 = State HA
1 = State INM
2 = State IO
2 = State OS
3 = State PM
2 = State H
8 = State PA
8 = NSC

AGTYP
Type of agency of respondent

40 = State, geographic bureaus
8 = State, secretariat/under secretary staff
14 = State, topical/issue-based bureaus
10 = State, information, support, liaison bureaus
8 = NSC

RANK
Rank; level in bureaucracy; title or title equivalent.

27 = Officer; desk officer (or equivalent)
25 = Office director; assistant office director (or equivalent)
21 = Deputy assistant secretary (or equivalent)
7 = Assistant secretary (or equivalent)

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GRADE

Grade; specific grading and/or ranking.

1 = Officer, FS-4 (or equivalent)
9 = Officer, FS-3 (or equivalent)
10 = Officer, FS-2 (or equivalent)
7 = Officer, FS-1 (or equivalent)
3 = Deputy office director (or equivalent)
22 = Office director (or equivalent)
16 = Deputy assistant secretary (or equivalent)
5 = Principle deputy assistant secretary (or equivalent)
7 = Assistant secretary (or equivalent)

ISSUE

Issues respondent deals with are at what level?

2 = Individual country, limited issue area
25 = Individual country, all issues
1 = Region, limited issue area
7 = Region, all issues
3 = All regions in geographic bureau, limited issue area
10 = All regions in geographic bureau, all issues
18 = Global, limited issue area
3 = Global, all issues
11 = Missing

SALIEN

Degree of salience of issue(s) respondent dealt with in 1988 (panelist based). (See Appendix 3)

17 = No salience
15 = Little salience
10 = Moderately salience
11 = High salience
15 = Highest salience
12 = Missing

CONSE

Existence of consensus on issue(s) respondent dealt with in 1988. (See Appendix 3)

35 = No consensus on issue
30 = Issue consensus
15 = Missing

CLEAV

Existence of cleavage on issue(s) respondent dealt with in 1988. (See Appendix 3)

46 = No cleavage on issue
19 = Issue cleavage
15 = Missing

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TIMPO

Amount of time respondent had been in present position when interviewed.

- 8 = Less than 6 months
- 7 = 6 months to less than 12 months
- 17 = 12 months to less than 18 months
- 7 = 18 months to less than 24 months
- 20 = 2 years to less than 3 years
- 9 = 3 years to less than 5 years
- 8 = 5 years or more
- 4 = Missing

TIME

Time period in which interview took place.

- 8 = December 10 - 11, 1987, March 8 - 10, 1988
- 4 = May 4 - 6, 1988
- 8 = June 8 - 10, 1988
- 10 = June 22 - 24, 1988
- 5 = July 13 - 15, 1988
- 8 = October 18 - 20, 1988
- 12 = November 14 - 18, 1988
- 14 = December 12 - 16, 1988
- 11 = January 10 - 13, 1989

TAPE

Did respondent agree to interview on tape.

- 26 = No
- 54 = Yes

PROF

Professional self-identification of respondent prior to joining State/NSC. (If no, career/profession prior to joining, coded as present profession self ID.)

- 33 = Foreign Service Officer
- 8 = Lawyer/law
- 8 = Military service
- 5 = Non-FSO bureaucratic career
- 3 = Journalist
- 2 = Peace Corps
- 18 = Social Science academic
- 3 = Teacher, non-social science

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GENERAL POLITICAL FACTORS WHICH ARE IMPORTANT...

Responses to question asking which types of general political factors are important to respondent in present position.

GEN1

First response - what political factors important

5 = National Security
12 = Administration goals/policy continuity
4 = Situationin foreign county(ies) dealt with
3 = Maintain good bilateral relations in foreign country(ies) dealt with
2 = American domestic politics (general)
5 = U.S. Congress
3 = Alliance relationships/issues
19 = National interests/best policy for U.S.
3 = Counter/deny/oppose communist countries/movements
1 = Human rights
3 = Bureaucratic politics/bureaucratic factors
1 = Economic principle/free trade
2 = Morality/ethics/"do what is right"
1 = Economic best interests of U.S.
2 = Feasibility/practicality
14 = Missing

GEN2

Second response - what political factors important

3 = National Security
6 = Administration goals/policy continuity
1 = Situation in foreign county(ies) dealt with
3 = Maintain good bilateral relations in foreign county(ies) dealt with
6 = American domestic politics (general)
9 = U.S. Congress
6 = U.S. public opinion
3 = Alliance relationships/issues
4 = National interests/best policy for U.S.
2 = Human rights
2 = Bureaucratic politics/bureaucratic factors
1 = Best interests of foreign county(ies) dealt with
3 = Support American principles/democracy abroad
4 = Regional relations in area dealt with
2 = American interest groups
2 = Economic principle/free trade
2 = Economic best interests of U.S.
1 = Feasibility/practicality
20 = Missing

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EN3

Third response - what political factors important

2 = National Security
2 = Administration goals/policy continuity
1 = Situation in foreign county(ies) dealt with
1 = Maintain good bilateral relations in foreign county(ies) dealt with
2 = American domestic politics (general)
7 = U.S. Congress
1 = U.S. public opinion
4 = Alliance relationships/issues
1 = Human rights
2 = Bureaucratic politics/bureaucratic factors
1 = Support American principles/democracy abroad
2 = Economic principle/free trade
1 = News media/press
2 = Economic best interests of U.S.
2 = Feasibility/practicality
49 = Missing

GEN4

Fourth response - what political factors important

1 = National Security
1 = American domestic politics (general)
1 = U.S. Congress
2 = U.S. public opinion
2 = Bureaucratic politics/bureaucratic factors
2 = Regional relations in area dealt with
2 = American interest groups
69 = Missing

GEN5

Fifth response - what political factors important

1 = U.S. Congress
1 = U.S. public opinion
1 = News media/press
77 = Missing

GPORD

Is order mentioned significant/usable ordering of responses?

11 = No; not significant/usable
55 = Yes; significant/usable
14 = Missing

GPNI

Was national interest/best policy for U.S. mentioned in open ended response?

41 = No; not mentioned
25 = Yes; mentioned
14 = Missing

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GPNS

Was national security mentioned in open ended response?

57 = No; not mentioned
9 = Yes; mentioned
14 = Missing

GPDP

Was U.S. domestic politics mentioned in open ended response?

55 = No; not mentioned
11 = Yes; mentioned
14 = Missing

GPCON

Was the U.S. Congress mentioned in open ended response?

45 = No; not mentioned
21 = Yes; mentioned
14 = Missing

GPPO

Was American public opinion mentioned in open ended response?

57 = No; not mentioned
9 = Yes; mentioned
14 = Missing

GPIG

Was interest groups mentioned in open ended response?

59 = No; not mentioned
7 = Yes; mentioned
14 = Missing

GPBP

Was bureaucratic politics/factors mentioned in open ended response?

57 = No; not mentioned
9 = Yes; mentioned
14 = Missing

GPMED

Was news media/press mentioned in open ended response?

65 = No; not mentioned
1 = Yes; mentioned
14 = Missing

GPFEA

Was feasibility/practicality mentioned in open ended response?

61 = No; not mentioned
5 = Yes; mentioned
14 = Missing

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DOMP

How important are U.S. domestic politics, generally and relative to other factors mentioned?

2 = Not at all important; very rarely important
10 = Slightly/occasionally important
18 = Somewhat/often important
38 = Very/always/nearly always important
12 = Missing

DOMWH

Follow-up to DOMP: Why are U.S. domestic politics important/not important?

IF Coded response for DOMP was somewhat or very important.

3 = Issue interdependence w. domestic politics; has effect on domestic population
12 = High level of public interest in policy area
18 = Need domestic political support for policy; practical imperative
14 = Effect of Congress on policy or policy implementation
7 = Set constraints/parameters

IF Coded response for DOMP was slightly important.

2 = High public interest in some of respondent's issues, low interest on other issues

IF Coded response for DOMP was slightly or or not at all important..

10 = Low level of public interest in policy area
1 = Best policy higher priority
13 = Missing

DOMESTIC POLITICAL FACTORS WHICH ARE IMPORTANT...

Responses to question asking which types of domestic political factors are important to respondent in present position.

DOM1

First response - what domestic factors important

1 = Public opinion
52 = Congress
2 = Economic interests/interest groups
1 = Ethnic interest groups
7 = News media/press
2 = Bureaucracy
1 = Human rights interest groups
1 = Reagan administration political constituencies
13 = Missing

DOM2

Second response - what domestic factors important

5 = Mixed interests/constituencies
15 = Public opinion
11 = Congress
7 = Economic interests/interest groups
5 = Ethnic interest groups
6 = News media/press
2 = Bureaucracy
3 = Human rights interest groups
26 = Missing

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DOM3

Third response - what domestic factors important

1 = Mixed interests/constituencies
12 = Public opinion
2 = Economic interests/interest groups
1 = Ethnic interest groups
6 = News media/press
58 = Missing

DPORD

Is order mentioned significant/usuable ordering of responses?

10 = No; not significant/usable
57 = Yes; significant/usable
13 = Missing

DPPO

Was public opinion mentioned in open ended response?

39 = No; not mentioned
28 = Yes; mentioned
13 = Missing

DPCON

Was Congress mentioned in open ended response?

5 = No; not mentioned
62 = Yes; mentioned
13 = Missing

DPEC

Was economic interest groups mentioned in open ended response?

56 = No; not mentioned
11 = Yes; mentioned
13 = Missing

DPETH

Was ethnic interest groups mentioned in open ended response?

61 = No; not mentioned
6 = Yes; mentioned
13 = Missing

DPMED

Was news media/press mentioned in open ended response?

50 = No; not mentioned
17 = Yes; mentioned
13 = Missing

DPBUR

Was bureaucratic politics/factors mentioned in open ended response?

63 = No; not mentioned
4 = Yes; mentioned
13 = Missing

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DPHUM

Was human rights groups mentioned in open ended response?

63 = No; not mentioned
4 = Yes; mentioned
13 = Missing

DPAMD

Was Reagan administration constituencies mentioned in open ended response?

66 = No; not mentioned
1 = Yes; mentioned
13 = Missing

DPMIX

Was mixed interests/constituencies mentioned in open ended response?

61 = No; not mentioned
6 = Yes; mentioned
13 = Missing

PUBOP

How important is American public opinion, generally?

3 = Not at all important; very rarely important
21 = Slightly/occasionally important
17 = Somewhat/often important
12 = Very/always/nearly always important
12 = Missing

PUBWH

Follow-up to PUBOP: Why is American public opinion important/not important?

Coded response for PUBOP was not at all or slightly important.

15 = Low level of public interest re issues; little or no opinion seen or expressed
6 = Primary interest is best policy; public opinion/polls should not lead policy
1 = Not a concern at respondent's level; concern of higher-ups
1 = Interest groups/interested public more important

Coded response for PUBOP was somewhat or very important.

5 = Public interest in issue area high
1 = Public opinion sets boundaries/constraints for policy
15 = Need public support/consensus for policy
5 = Public opinion becomes important when public interested/aroused about a given policy
4 = Public opinion an integral part of respondent's role
1 = Important for effect upon elected officials and political appointees
14 = Important for effect on other political institutions
12 = Missing

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FOREIGN POLICy AREAS WHERE DOMESTIC POLITICS ARE IMPORTANT...

Responses to question asking which areas of foreign policy respondent deals with are most important in terms of domestic political factors.

IMP1

First issue area mentioned as important in terms of domestic political factors.

NOTE: Only first reponse coded in this variable. All responses were recorded and are included in the variables which follow.

1 = Drugs
2 = Arms Control
2 = Foreign aid expenditures
1 = Foreign investment (in U.S.)
2 = Agricultural issues
3 = Soviet Union/Eastern Europe
1 = Anti-communism/easing tensions w communist countries
1 = Oil
2 = Nuclear non-proliferation
3 = Deployment of armed forces
4 = Arms sales
4 = Terrorism
10 = Trade
11 = Middle east/Israel
9 = Central America/Contras
4 = South Africa/apartheid
1 = Environmental issues
4 = Human rights
4 = Miscellaneous, specific country
1 = Miscellaneous, specific issue
3 = Nothing; no areas where domestic factors important
7 = Missing

IMHUM

Was human rights mentioned in open ended response?

60 = No; not mentioned
13 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMARM

Was arms sales mentioned in open ended response?

66 = No; not mentioned
7 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMTER

Was terrorism mentioned in open ended response?

66 = No; not mentioned
7 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMTRA

Was trade mentioned in open ended response?

61 = No; not mentioned
12 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

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IMENV
Was environmental issues mentioned in open ended response?
68 = No; not mentioned
5 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMDRU
Was drugs mentioned in open ended response?
69 = No; not mentioned
4 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMCON
Was arms control mentioned in open ended response?
67 = No; not mentioned
6 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMFAI
Was foreign aid mentioned in open ended response?
71 = No; not mentioned
2 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMFOO
Was food aid/famine relief mentioned in open ended response?
70 = No; not mentioned
3 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMBUR
Was military burdensharing mentioned in open ended response?
70 = No; not mentioned
3 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMINV
Was foreign investment mentioned in open ended response?
71 = No; not mentioned
2 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMAGR
Was agricultural issues mentioned in open ended response?
71 = No; not mentioned
2 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

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IMCOM

Was anti-communism/easing tensions with communist countries mentioned in open ended response?

70 = No; not mentioned
3 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMOIL

Was oil mentioned in open ended response?

70 = No; not mentioned
3 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMNPR

Was nuclear non-proliferation mentioned in open-ended response?

71 = No; not mentioned
2 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMDEP

Was armed forces deployment mentioned in open ended response?

69 = No; not mentioned
4 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMAID

Was AIDS mentioned in open ended response?

71 = No; not mentioned
2 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMMID

Was the Middle East mentioned in open ended response?

57 = No; not mentioned
16 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMCEN

Was Central America mentioned in open ended response?

64 = No; not mentioned
9 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMSAF

Was South Africa mentioned in open ended response?

63 = No; not mentioned
10 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

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IMJAP

Was Japan mentioned in open ended response?

69 = No; not mentioned
4 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

IMEEU

Was Eastern Europe/Soviet Union mentioned in open ended response?

69 = No; not mentioned
4 = Yes; mentioned
7 = Missing

INFDP

How important does respondent think it is, given position, for him/her to be informed about American domestic politics?

0 = Not at all important; very rarely important
4 = Slightly/occasionally important
15 = Somewhat/often important
48 = Very/always/nearly always important
13 = Missing

INFDW

Follow-up to INFDP: Why is it important/not important to be informed about American domestic politics?

Coded response for INFDP was not at all or slightly important..

1 = No need unless direct relevance to own issues
2 = No need to do more than the average citizen should

Coded response for INFDP was slightly or somewhat important.

3 = It's important, but time/energy/resources are limited
1 = Respondent's issues not high salience in domestic politics

Coded response for INFDP was somewhat or very important..

7 = Important because of Congress effect on foreign policy
7 = Need to know limits/constraints on policy
3 = Need to be able to represent U.S. abroad
8 = General need for domestic support for policy success
3 = Normative imperative; democratic responsiveness
5 = Necessary; cannot ignore in Washington environment
2 = General personal interest, not necessarily related to job
10 = Vague response on general need to be aware of domestic politics
2 = Nature of position; public opinion integral to job
3 = Need to communicate with others (Congress, interest groups, general public, etc.)
1 = Need to know how elections will affect policy.
1 = Effect of domestic politics on policy agenda; agenda setting
4 = Issue interdependence; foreign & domestic policy area tied
16 = Missing

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INFORMATION SOURCES ON DOMESTIC POLITICS...

DIPRE

Was news media/press mentioned in open ended response?

4 = No; not mentioned
71 = Yes; mentioned
5 = Missing

DIRAD

Was radio news mentioned in open ended response?

68 = No; not mentioned
7 = Yes; mentioned
5 = Missing

DIMAG

Was news magazines mentioned in open ended response?

48 = No; not mentioned
27 = Yes; mentioned
5 = Missing

DIJRN

Was professional/academic journals mentioned in open ended response?

61 = No; not mentioned
14 = Yes; mentioned
5 = Missing

DIFRE

Was friends/neighbors/acquaintances mentioned in open ended response?

6 = No; not mentioned
7 = Yes; mentioned
5 = Missing

DICOL

Was professional colleagues mentioned in open ended response?

53 = No; not mentioned
22 = Yes; mentioned
5 = Missing

DICNN

Was CNN mentioned in open ended response?

72 = No; not mentioned
3 = Yes; mentioned
5 = Missing

DITV

Was TV news mentioned in open ended response?

46 = No; not mentioned
29 = Yes; mentioned
5 = Missing

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DIEDI

Was editorials/op eds mentioned in open ended response?

72 = No; not mentioned
3 = Yes; mentioned
5 = Missing

DIPOL

Was public opinion polls mentioned in open ended response?

68 = No; not mentioned
7 = Yes; mentioned
5 = Missing

DIPEO

Was people met outside Washington mentioned in open ended response?

69 = No; not mentioned
6 = Yes; mentioned
5 = Missing

DIINT

Was interest groups mentioned in open ended response?

71 = No; not mentioned
4 = Yes; mentioned
5 = Missing

DIMEM

Was departmental memos/news clips mentioned in open ended response?

66 = No; not mentioned
9 = Yes; mentioned
5 = Missing

DILET

Was outside letters/phone calls mentioned in open ended response?

74 = No; not mentioned
1 = Yes; mentioned
5 = Missing

INFORMATION SOURCES ON PUBLIC OPINION...

PIPRE

Was news media/press mentioned in open ended response?

8 = No; not mentioned
68 = Yes; mentioned
4 = Missing

PIRAD

Was radio news mentioned in open ended response?

70 = No; not mentioned
6 = Yes; mentioned
4 = Missing

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PIMAG
Was news magazines mentioned in open ended response?
68 = No; not mentioned
8 = Yes; mentioned
4 = Missing

PIJRN
Was professional/academic journals mentioned in open ended response?
70 = No; not mentioned
6 = Yes; mentioned
4 = Missing

PIFRE
Was friends/neighbors/acquaintances mentioned in open ended response?
65 = No; not mentioned
11 = Yes; mentioned
4 = Missing

PICOL
Was professional colleagues mentioned in open ended response?
62 = No; not mentioned
14 = Yes; mentioned
4 = Missing

PITV
Was TV news mentioned in open ended response?
48 = No; not mentioned
28 = Yes; mentioned
4 = Missing

PIEDI
Was editorials/op eds mentioned in open ended response?
70 = No; not mentioned
6 = Yes; mentioned
4 = Missing

PIPOL
Was public opinion polls mentioned in open ended response?
58 = No; not mentioned
18 = Yes; mentioned
4 = Missing

PIPEO
Was people met outside Washington mentioned in open ended response?
63 = No; not mentioned
13 = Yes; mentioned
4 = Missing

PIINT
Was interest groups mentioned in open ended response?
63 = No; not mentioned
13 = Yes; mentioned
4 = Missing

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PIMEM

Was departmental memos/news clips mentioned in open ended response?

59 = No; not mentioned
17 = Yes; mentioned
4 = Missing

PILET

Was outside letters/phone calls mentioned in open ended response?

61 = No; not mentioned
15 = Yes; mentioned
4 = Missing

PICON

Was Congress mentioned in open ended response?

63 = No; not mentioned
13 = Yes; mentioned
4 = Missing

MEDIM

"When you're involved in formulating or implementing a policy, how important is news media coverage of that policy to you?"

5 = Not at all/very rarely important
15 = Slightly/occasionally important
3 = Somewhat/often important
39 = Very/always/nearly always important
18 = Missing

MEDWH

Follow-up to MEDIM: Why is such newsmedia coverage important/not important to you?

If Coded response for MEDIM was not at all or slightly important.

5 = Little press interest in policy area
4 = Prefers that there be no coverage of policy area
3 = Sole interest in looking at media is for accuracy check
5 = Not concerned/not interested/will find information in other ways.
2 = Press doesn't/shouldn't affect policy
1 = Not important because media coverage is inaccurate

If Coded response for MEDIM was somewhat or very important.

9 = Need to respond; need to prepare press guidance
7 = Oversee/ensure accurate coverage
7 = For effect on domestic political agenda; affect on Congress and the public
4 = Press reflects public/domestic interest and/or feelings
3 = Extra source of information/input
3 = Combination - to respond to and to have extra information source.
4 = To try to control reaction to policy; control political agenda
2 = Heavy coverage of issue; controversial issue
2 = Nature of position/job
19 = Missing

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DEFINITIONS OF DESIRABLE AND UNDESIRABLE MEDIA COVERAGE...

GAACU

Was accuracy mentioned as a feature of desirable coverage?

18 = Not mentioned
28 = Mentioned
34 = Missing

GOBJ

Was objectivity mentioned as a feature of desirable coverage?

35 = Not mentioned
11 = Mentioned
34 = Missing

GSUPP

Was being supportive of administration policy mentioned as a feature of desirable coverage?

37 = Not mentioned
9 = Mentioned
34 = Missing

GRES

Was being well researched and/or intelligently written mentioned as a feature of desirable coverage?

36 = Not mentioned
10 = Mentioned
34 = Missing

GELIT

Was reaching influential people/elites mentioned as a feature of desirable coverage?

44 = Not mentioned
2 = Mentioned
34 = Missing

GPUB

Was reaching as wide a public as possible mentioned as a feature of desirable coverage?

43 = Not mentioned
3 = Mentioned
34 = Missing

GPRCO

Was presenting both sides of the issue mentioned as a feature of desirable coverage?

44 = Not mentioned
2 = Mentioned
34 = Missing

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GPROT

Was protection of classified information mentioned as a feature of desirable coverage?

45 = Not mentioned
1 = Mentioned
34 = Missing

BACCU

Was inaccuracy mentioned as a feature of undesirable coverage?

23 = Not mentioned
27 = Mentioned
30 = Missing

BOBJ

Was lack of objectivity mentioned as a feature of undesirable coverage?

32 = Not mentioned
18 = Mentioned
30 = Missing

BLEAK

Was being based upon leaked/classified information mentioned as a feature of undesirable coverage?

45 = Not mentioned
5 = Mentioned
30 = Missing

BRES

Was bad research/failure to check sources mentioned as a feature of undesirable coverage?

37 = Not mentioned
13 = Mentioned
30 = Missing

BREL

Was damaging of relations with other countries mentioned as a feature of undesirable coverage?

43 = Not mentioned
7 = Mentioned
30 = Missing

BCON

Was emphasis on conflict or controversy mentioned as a feature of undesirable coverage?

4 = Not mentioned
3 = Mentioned
30 = Missing

BSENS

Was sensationalism mentioned as a feature of undesirable coverage?

48 = Not mentioned
2 = Mentioned
30 = Missing

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BWORS

Was putting policy in a deliberately bad light, or seeking policy change, mentioned as a feature of undesirable coverage?

- 47 = Not mentioned
- 3 = Mentioned
- 30 = Missing

INFPO

How important does respondent think it is, given position, for him/her to be informed about American public opinion?

- 0 = Not at all important; very rarely important
- 12 = Slightly/occasionally important/
- 29 = Somewhat/often important
- 24 = Very/always/nearly always important
- 15 = Missing

INFPW

Follow-up to INFPO: Why is it important/not important to be informed about American public opinion?

If Coded response for INFPO was slightly important.

- 4 = There is little public interest in most/all of respondent's issues
- 2 = Public opinion not heard/articulated; can't know public opinion
- 3 = Public opinion is not really important; Congress or other political institutions more important

If Coded response for INFPO was slightly or somewhat important.

- 7 = There is need to know public opinion, but it is hard to find; not articulated or seen in issues respondent deals with
- 1 = There is need to know public opinion, but ability to do so time/resource constrained
- 2 = Need to know public opinion, but public opinion second priority to experts; need for officials to lead.
- 4 = Already knows/has feel for public opinion on issues.

If Coded response for INFPO was somewhat or very important.

- 11 = There is a need to know limits/constraints on policy
- 1 = Need to know to be able to represent U.S. abroad
- 10 = General need for public support for policy success; need to know what public will support
- 1 = High level of public interest in respondent's issues
- 3 = Need to know for effect of public opinion upon Congress
- 2 = Done for personal interest or reasons; not really necessary for job
- 1 = Need to be responsive to public's feelings
- 12 = Vague response on general need to be aware of public opinion
- 1 = Nature of position/job
- 15 = Missing

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OPERATIONALIZATION OF PUBLIC OPINION...

Following are variables in response to question asking respondent to describe what operationalizes or represents public opinion to him/her; in discussing public opinion, what does respondent mean?

OPCON

Was Congress mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

41 = Not mentioned
29 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

OPINT

Was interest groups mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

51 = Not mentioned
19 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

OPPOL

Was public opinion polls mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

53 = Not mentioned
17 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

OPELE

Was elections mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

65 = Not mentioned
5 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

OPMED

Was newsmedia/press mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

38 = Not mentioned
32 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

OPLET

Was outside letters/calls mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

59 = Not mentioned
11 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

OPSPE

Was public speaking/speaker feedback mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

65 = Not mentioned
5 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

OPED

Was editorials/op-ed pieces mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

66 = Not mentioned
4 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

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OPOFF

Was government officials mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

69 = Not mentioned
1 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

OPELI

Was elites (general; vague) mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

61 = Not mentioned
9 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

OPMAS

Was the mass public (general; vague) mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

58 = Not mentioned
12 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

OPAFF

Was affected publics (general; vague) mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

69 = Not mentioned
1 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

OPFRE

Was friends/contacts outside government mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

68 = Not mentioned
2 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

OPACA

Was academics/experts mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

67 = Not mentioned
3 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

OPEXP

Was expressed mass opinion/interested public mentioned as an operationalization of public opinion?

67 = Not mentioned
3 = Mentioned
10 = Missing

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FACPO

How does respondent factor public opinion into decisions; at what stage in the decision process does public opinion typically become a concern?

8 = Never factored in; very low priority if factored at all
9 = Secondary factor; decide on best policy first, then consider public opinion/reaction
6 = Usually not first cut unless real or anticipated public reaction reaction requires response
4 = A high priority on major/salient issues, otherwise secondary
37 = First cut; always a factor; constraint
16 = Missing

ANTPO

Does respondent ever try to anticipate public reaction to policies under consideration?

10 = Never; rarely
7 = Often
44 = Very often; always
19 = Missing

OPPPO

Respondent presented with hypothetical situation of public opposition to a recently-made policy decision. How would subject respond to such a situation?

11 = Do nothing
1 = Keep policy the same, unless long-term/major opposition develops, then try to educate/inform public
25 = Only try to educate/inform public
5 = Keep policy the same, unless long-term/major opposition develops, then consider changing policy
1 = Undertake marginal policy change without changing policy substance
2 = If a major, issue keep policy same and educate/inform public; if minor, issue consider change in policy
15 = Try to educate/inform first, consider change if education efforts unsuccessful
4 = Reexamine policy; change if opposing viewpoint has merit
2 = Be responsive; look for compromise
14 = Missing

ABRPO

Is respondent able to keep as abreast/informed about public opinion as desired?

51 = Yes
24 = No
5 = Missing

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ABRPW

Follow-up to ABRPO: Why/why not is respondent able to keep as abreast/informed of public opinion as desired?

If Coded response for ABRPO was Yes.

- 32 = Respondent has enough information available
- 3 = Doesn't need to know a lot about public opinion in respondent's position
- 6 = There is little public opinion on respondent's issues, or lack of poll data/information to see.
- 4 = The interested public gets its message through to respondent
- 6 = Has sense of national mood on own issues

If Coded response for ABRPO was No.

- 3 = Needs/wants more contact with interested/affected public
- 8 = Not enough time, too much information
- 5 = Does not know enough about opinion outside Washington/East Coast.
- 7 = Not enough relevant information available; polls don't ask question respondent wants to know.
- 6 = Missing

OAPAW

Is respondent aware of OAP public opinion memos?

- 8 = No
- 60 = Yes
- 12 = Missing

OAPGT

Does respondent personally see OAP public opinion memos in present position?

- 13 = No
- 55 = Yes
- 12 = Missing

OAPRD

(If gets OAP memos) How thoroughly/carefully does respondent read memos?

- 4 = Not read at all.
- 39 = Read briefly; skim
- 8 = Sometimes read well if on issues relevant to respondent
- 4 = Usually/always reads carefully
- 25 = Missing

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OAPRW

Follow-up to OAPRD: Why does/does not respondent read OAP memos thoroughly/carefully?

If Coded response for OAPRD was not at all or briefly.

6 = Distrust of polls; polls can't tell much about public opinion
16 = Memos are rarely relevant to respondent
10 = Too busy; no time
8 = Already has enough information available; already has sense of public opinion without memos
1 = Not necessary to know about public opinion in respondent's position
2 = Look at only if major change in opinion; not interested in minor fluctuation

If Coded response for OAPRD was sometimes or usually.

2 = Memos themselves well done/interesting
1 = Personal interest in public opinion
8 = Needs to know all information on issues relevant to role
26 = Missing

OAPIM

How important are OAP memos (relative to all other sources) to respondent in learning about public opinion?

9 = Not at all important
27 = Slightly important
16 = Somewhat important
5 = Very important
23 = Missing

OAPIW

Follow-up to OAPIM: Why are memos important/not important as source of public opinion information?

If Coded response for OAPIM was not at all or slightly important.

8 = Public opinion polls naturally flawed, either by methodology or by measuring uninformed opinion.
11 = Memos are rarely on issues relevant to respondent
2 = Too busy; has no time
14 = Already has sense of public opinion from other sources
2 = Public opinion information not needed in role
1 = Memos lack good analysis or presentation

If Coded response for OAPIM was somewhat or very important.

8 = Memos reinforce impressions about public opinion; can be good supplement to other sources
4 = Good summary; good information presentation
3 = More specific or in-depth questions than can be gotten elsewhere
3 = Memos/poll data not biased as polls in news media are
1 = Provide useful facts for reinforcing policy positions
23 = Missing

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OAPWA

If respondent does not receive OAP memos, would he/she like to get them? Why?

3 = Doesn't want; doesn't have time for them
3 = Doesn't want; doesn't have need for them
4 = Ambivalent; wants but feels probably would not have time to read them
2 = Wants if on issues relevant to respondent
1 = Wants all such memos
67 = Missing

POCON

Does respondent feel as if public opinion places constraints upon him/her in present foreign policy position?

50 = No
2 = Some; mixed
16 = Yes
12 = Missing

CONWH

Follow-up to POCON: If respondent was coded in POCON as does not feel constrained, Why not constrained by public opinion?

7 = Public essentially supports policy
6 = Public knows little or nothing about issue area
3 = Congress is constraint, not public opinion
64 = Missing

CONGB

If feels constrained by public opinion (from POCON), how does respondent feel about constraints in terms of desirability; normative feelings about constraints.

0 = Very negative
7 = Negative
18 = Neutral; mixed
23 = Positive
3 = Very positive
16 = Not relevant; not constrained
13 = Missing

COGBW

Follow-up to CONGB: Why does respondent feel as he/she does about constraints?

If Coded response for CONGB was negative or very negative.

2 = Constraints are unduly restrictive of foreign policy
1 = Constraints based upon uninformed opinions in public
2 = Constraints damage relations with other countries
2 = Opposition to policy usually comes from narrowly/ ideologically based interests

If Coded response for CONGB was neutral or mixed.

10 = Constraints element of reality; they are part of job
4 = Constraints don't really affect respondent
4 = Mixed feelings; need for responsiveness, but public opinion often too constraining

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If Coded response for CONGB was positive or very positive

3 = Need for check on executive power
6 = Need for check against bad policy
4 = Sets limits of political feasibility because public support needed to carry out policy
6 = Normative imperative
4 = Vague response - nature of U.S. system
1 = Define national policy direction
1 = Increase contacts with groups in public
30 = Missing

CONYN

During time in current position, has respondent been involved in any cases where public opinion directly constrained him/her?

27 = No
37 = Yes
16 = Missing

BOSPO

Does respondent feel as if his/her boss/superior is more or less concerned about public opinion than respondent is?

4 = Boss is less concerned
28 = Respondent and boss, same level of concern
28 = Boss is more concerned
1 = Does not know; can't tell
19 = Missing

BOSPR

Follow-up to BOSPO: If boss more concerned than respondent, does this ever result in pressure upon respondent to take public opinion more into account than he/she would otherwise?

19 = No
13 = Yes
48 = Missing

DIFFERENTIATION OF IMPORTANT GROUPS WITHIN PUBLIC...

Following are dummy variables of different sub-groups within public at large which respondent cited when was asked, in open-ended question with cues, to identify which groups he/she usually tries to know the opinions of or be in touch with.

CONSERV

Were conservative political groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

58 = Not mentioned
9 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

RELIG

Were religious groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

56 = Not mentioned
11 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

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DEFENS

Was the defense industry mentioned?

63 = Not mentioned
4 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

TRADO

Were trade groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

63 = Not mentioned
4 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

INBUS

Were individual businesses (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

64 = Not mentioned
3 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

ENERG

Were energy firms (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

60 = Not mentioned
7 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

BANKS

Were banks (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

64 = Not mentioned
3 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

AGRSE

Were agricultural sector groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

63 = Not mentioned
4 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

MISSE

Was a particular business sector (other than those specifically listed above and below) mentioned?

63 = Not mentioned
4 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

BUSGR

Was business generally, or an umbrella business group (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

49 = Not mentioned
18 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

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JEWS

Were Jews or Jewish interest groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

50 = Not mentioned
16 = Mentioned
14 = Missing

ARABS

Were Arabs or Arab interest groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

58 = Not mentioned
8 = Mentioned
14 = Missing

BLACK

Were Blacks or black interest groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

60 = Not mentioned
6 = Mentioned
14 = Missing

GREEK

Were Greeks or Greek interest groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

62 = Not mentioned
4 = Mentioned
14 = Missing

EEURP

Were Eastern Europeans or Eastern European interest groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

62 = Not mentioned
4 = Mentioned
14 = Missing

CUBAN

Were Cubans or Cuban interest groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

61 = Not mentioned
5 = Mentioned
14 = Missing

EASIA

Were East Asians or East Asian interest groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

63 = Not mentioned
3 = Mentioned
14 = Missing

SAISIA

Were South Asians or South Asian interest groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

65 = Not mentioned
1 = Mentioned
14 = Missing

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IRISH

Were Irish or Irish interest groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

65 = Not mentioned
1 = Mentioned
14 = Missing

AFLCIO

Was the AFL-CIO mentioned?

59 = Not mentioned
8 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

LABGE

Was labor or labor groups (other than AFL-CIO) mentioned?

59 = Not mentioned
8 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

AGHUM

Were human rights groups (generally or a specific groups(s)) mentioned?

45 = Not mentioned
22 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

AGACA

Was academics or foreign policy experts mentioned?

46 = Not mentioned
21 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

AGELI

Was elites/opinion leaders mentioned?

64 = Not mentioned
3 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

AGENV

Were environmental groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

64 = Not mentioned
3 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

AGDRU

Were anti-drug interest groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

66 = Not mentioned
1 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

AGCON

Were consumer groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

65 = Not mentioned
2 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

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AGJOU

Were journalists/media mentioned?

65 = Not mentioned
2 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

AGSEC

Were security groups (generally or a specific group(s)) mentioned?

63 = Not mentioned
4 = Mentioned
13 = Missing

PINFL

In general and in all areas of foreign policy, how much influence does respondent think public opinion has upon foreign policy?

0 = None at all
7 = Slight/little influence
2 = Some influence; neutral
31 = Much influence
10 = Very much influence
6 = Missing

POLICY AREAS WHERE PUBLIC OPINION HAS HAD INFLUENCE...

PINCA

Was Central America/Contras mentioned as influenced by public opinion?

50 = Not mentioned
25 = Mentioned
5 = Missing

PINJA

Was Japan mentioned as influenced by public opinion?

71 = Not mentioned
4 = Mentioned
5 = Missing

PINME

Was Middle East/Israel mentioned as influenced by public opinion?

64 = Not mentioned
11 = Mentioned
5 = Missing

PINSA

Was South Africa/apartheid mentioned as influenced by public opinion?

69 = Not mentioned
6 = Mentioned
5 = Missing

PINSU

Was relations with the Soviet Union mentioned as influenced by public opinion?

61 = Not mentioned
14 = Mentioned
5 = Missing

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PINFO

Was use of force/military deployment mentioned as influenced by public opinion?

66 = Not mentioned
9 = Mentioned
5 = Missing

PINAC

Was arms control mentioned as influenced by public opinion?

66 = Not mentioned
9 = Mentioned
5 = Missing

PINTR

Was trade mentioned as influenced by public opinion?

73 = Not mentioned
2 = Mentioned
5 = Missing

PINHR

Was human rights mentioned as influenced by public opinion?

72 = Not mentioned
3 = Mentioned
5 = Missing

PINGR

Was Grenada mentioned as influenced by public opinion?

73 = Not mentioned
2 = Mentioned
5 = Missing

POML

Does respondent think public opinion should have more or less influence over foreign policy than it currently does?

1 = Much less
6 = Some/a bit less
56 = Same amount; neutral
11 = Some/a bit more
1 = Much more
5 = Missing

POMLW

Follow-up to POML: Why does respondent think public opinion should have more/same/less influence?

If Coded response for POML was much or a bit less.

3 = Public opinion too constraining already
3 = Public knows too little about issues; too little public awareness
1 = Public opinion intrudes too often in policy process

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If Coded response for POML was same or neutral.

12 = Vague response; OK as is
16 = Good as is; balances responsiveness with need for policy makers to lead
8 = Good as is; should only be more influence if public becomes better informed about foreign policy
9 = Current influence accepted as nature of system
2 = Mixed response; public should have more influence if becomes better educated, else should have less
2 = Current influence good - acts as check on policy
2 = Current influence good - acts as check on executive
1 = Influence good - domestic consensus on policy
4 = Public opinion has aided/driven policy in direction preferred by respondent
1 = Attentive/interested public gets messages through

If Coded response for POML was a bit more or much more.

5 = Wants more public influence, but wants public to be better informed as well
2 = Higher levels of public input gives policy more legitimacy
1 = More public influence means lessening of special interests' power
2 = Need more responsiveness
6 = Missing

POTRE

Does respondent see a trend in the amount of influence public opinion has had in foreign policy over the past twenty years; is public opinion becoming more or less important?

0 = Becoming much less important
5 = Becoming a bit/somewhat less important
21 = No trend; same level of importance
21 = Becoming a bit/somewhat more important
25 = Becoming much more important
8 = Missing

TREGB

Follow-up to POTRE: If does see trend over past twenty years, Does respondent think this trend is positive or negative?

1 = Very negative
8 = Somewhat negative
10 = Neutral; mixed or no value judgement
26 = Somewhat positive
6 = Very positive
29 = Missing

TRGBW

Follow-up to TREGB: If sees trend in influence of public opinion, why does respondent feel that trend is positive/negative?

If Coded response for TREGB was somewhat or very negative.

1 = Public opinion reduces policy flexibility/options
4 = Public influence resulted in too much public/Congressional intervention in policy process
2 = Public opinion not aware/educated enough on foreign policy
1 = Change in influence has given more power to special interests

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If Coded response for TREGB was neutral.

7 = Neutral value judgement; accepted as reality
3 = Mixed attitudes - policy should be accountable but public lacks sufficient knowledge of policies

If Coded response for TREGB was somewhat or very positive.

9 = Public good check; accountability
12 = Need public support/consensus for policy
3 = Public opinion helped policy to move in direction favored by respondent
3 = Public awareness/education on foreign policy issues has increased
3 = Public input increases policy legitimacy
1 = Public needs to have trust in government
2 = Vaguely positive response
29 = Missing

WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS...

Following 29 questions are from written questionnaire.

CONG1

Question 1: Because members of Congress need to consider a wide range of domestic and foreign policy issues in a short space of time, their judgements on issues of foreign policy are usually not well thought out.

7 = Strongly Agree
29 = Somewhat Agree
34 = Somewhat Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
5 = Missing

MILFOR1

Question 2: Because of the risks involved in the use of military forces abroad, the use of military means to achieve foreign policy goals should be contemplated only where there is a direct security threat to the United States.

7 = Strongly Agree
19 = Somewhat Agree
37 = Somewhat Disagree
13 = Strongly Disagree
4 = Missing

PUBY1

Question 3: The United States would be better served if foreign policy officials were less restricted by public opinion and domestic issues.

2 = Strongly Agree
13 = Somewhat Agree
38 = Somewhat Disagree
23 = Strongly Disagree
4 = Missing

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CONG2

Question 4: The United States would be better served if foreign policy officials were less restricted by the Congress.

9 = Strongly Agree
37 = Somewhat Agree
21 = Somewhat Disagree
9 = Strongly Disagree
4 = Missing

PUBY2

Question 5: In a democracy, it is necessary for government to reflect the will of the people on all specific issues of foreign policy.

15 = Strongly Agree
16 = Somewhat Agree
21 = Somewhat Disagree
4 = Strongly Disagree
4 = Missing

PUBX1

Question 6: The public simply does not have the sophistication necessary to make reasonable and rational decisions on foreign policy issues.

1 = Strongly Agree
27 = Somewhat Agree
34 = Somewhat Disagree
14 = Strongly Disagree
4 = Missing

GOAL1

Question 7: A primary goal of United States foreign policy should be to maintain the U.S.'s dominance in military power.

18 = Strongly Agree
27 = Somewhat Agree
24 = Somewhat Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
6 = Missing

PUBY3

Question 8: In an elected government it is often necessary to be aware of public opinion for electoral purposes, but beyond such electoral considerations, public opinion should not affect foreign policy decisions.

0 = Strongly Agree
7 = Somewhat Agree
31 = Somewhat Disagree
37 = Strongly Disagree
5 = Missing

MEDIA

Question 9: For the most part, the major news media cover U.S. foreign policy accurately and fairly.

5 = Strongly Agree
35 = Somewhat Agree
31 = Somewhat Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
4 = Missing

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PUBX2

Question 10: Most people in this country simply don't pay enough attention to current events for their opinions on foreign policy issues to be meaningful.

12 = Strongly Agree
31 = Somewhat Agree
26 = Somewhat Disagree
7 = Strongly Disagree
4 = Missing

MILFOR2

Question 11: The demonstration and occasional use of military force or power are useful means by which to achieve solutions to foreign policy problems.

20 = Strongly Agree
40 = Somewhat Agree
12 = Somewhat Disagree
3 = Strongly Disagree
5 = Missing

PUBY4

Question 12: In a democracy, it is often necessary for public officials to be aware of public opinion for political purposes. But beyond such political factors, public officials should not be greatly concerned with public opinion on questions of foreign policy.

0 = Strongly Agree
9 = Somewhat Agree
31 = Somewhat Disagree
35 = Strongly Disagree
5 = Missing

PUBX3

Question 13: In foreign and security policies, there is a need for long-range strategic planning which the public does not grasp.

16 = Strongly Agree
35 = Somewhat Agree
19 = Somewhat Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
5 = Missing

FOROFF1

Question 14: It is often difficult for United States foreign policy officials to deal with officials from other nations because such foreign officials do not fully grasp the complexities of American domestic politics and the difficulties of implementing policy in the United States.

16 = Strongly Agree
42 = Somewhat Agree
13 = Somewhat Disagree
4 = Strongly Disagree
5 = Missing

PUBX4

Question 15: Most people in the U.S. have limited attention spans and public sentiments on foreign policy issues are usually short-lived.

16 = Strongly Agree
35 = Somewhat Agree
19 = Somewhat Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
5 = Missing

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FOROFF2

Question 16: Leaders and officials of most foreign governments tend be be excessively and unfairly critical of United States foreign policies and actions.

3 = Strongly Agree
17 = Somewhat Agree
45 = Somewhat Disagree
9 = Strongly Disagree
6 = Missing

PUBX5

Question 17: On foreign policy problems, most people in the U.S. prefer "quick fixes" and are not able to see the long-term implications of policy decisions.

14 = Strongly Agree
41 = Somewhat Agree
18 = Somewhat Disagree
1 = Strongly Disagree
6 = Missing

PUBY5

Question 18: When there is a major threat to national security, policy makers should follow the best course to ensure the national security, even when that course is opposed by a large majority of the public.

24 = Strongly Agree
35 = Somewhat Agree
9 = Somewhat Disagree
5 = Strongly Disagree
7 = Missing

PUBX6

Question 19: For most people in the U.S., foreign policy issues are simply too far from their everyday experiences for them to understand such issues.

9 = Strongly Agree
23 = Somewhat Agree
38 = Somewhat Disagree
6 = Strongly Disagree
4 = Missing

GOAL2

Question 20: A primary goal of United States foreign policy should be to maintain (or restore) the U.S.'s dominance in international economic affairs.

14 = Strongly Agree
39 = Somewhat Agree
20 = Somewhat Disagree
3 =Strongly Disagree
4 = Missing

PUBY6

Question 21: There is a need for continuity and consistency in American defense and foreign policy that requires that the public's role in influencing such policies be minimized.

1 = Strongly Agree
13 = Somewhat Agree
35 = Somewhat Disagree
25 = Strongly Disagree
6 = Missing

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PUBY7

Question 22: Although it might be difficult to administer in actual practice, more public input into foreign policy decisions would be good for the U.S.

6 = Strongly Agree
37 = Somewhat Agree
30 = Somewhat Disagree
3 = Strongly Disagree
4 = Missing

PUBX7

Question 23: When presented with accurate information, the majority of people in the United States are capable of logical reasoning in national security issues.

20 = Strongly Agree
50 = Somewhat Agree
4 = Somewhat Disagree
2 = Strongly Disagree
4 = Missing

CONG3

Question 24: In the U.S. government, it is often necessary for foreign policy officials to be aware of Congressional opinions and desires because of the Congress' oversight and budgeting roles. Beyond this, however, foreign policy officials should not be greatly concerned with the Congress on foreign policy issues.

0 = Strongly Agree
5 = Somewhat Agree
29 = Somewhat Disagree
42 = Strongly Disagree
4 = Missing

AGE

Question 25: Respondent's approximate age in years.

2 = 30 or less
24 = 31 to 40
33 = 41 to 50
15 = 51 to 60
3 = More than 60
3 = Missing

YRGOVT

Question 26: Approximate number of years respondent has served in a foreign policy or national security agency.

23 = 10 or fewer
17 = 11 to 15
12 = 16 to 20
9 = 21 to 25
16 = More than 25
3 = Missing

FSO

Question 28: Is or was respondent a Foreign Service Officer?

23 = No; not FSO
55 = Yes; FSO
2 = Missing

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PID

Question 29: Respondent self-placement on seven point party identification scale.

4 = Strong Democrat
10 = Weak Democrat
19 = Independent, leaning Democrat
16 = Independent
10 = Independent, leaning Republican
7 = Weak Republican
7 = Strong Republican
7 = Missing

LIBCON

Question 30: Respondent self-placement on seven point political orientation (ideology) scale.

0 = Strong liberal
9 = Liberal
18 = Moderate liberal
22 = Moderate
21 = Moderate conservative
3 = Conservative
1 = Strong conservative
6 = Missing

NSC

Does respondent served on the national security council, and/or was last government position on national security?

72 = No; non-NSC
8 = Yes; NSC

PRES

Was respondent still in government position when interviewed?

4 = No
76 = Yes

PA

Is respondent in the Public Affairs Bureau (PA) of State Dept?

72 = No
8 = Yes

APPWEAK

Is/was respondent a political appointee?

62 = No
18 = Yes

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