

**ETHNIC INTEREST GROUPS AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY:
SOURCES OF INFLUENCE**

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**ETHNIC INTEREST GROUPS AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY:
SOURCES OF INFLUENCE**

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ABSTRACT

ETHNIC INTEREST GROUPS AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY: SOURCES OF INFLUENCE

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Ethnic interest groups have historically played a role in the making of American foreign policy but their influence has increased especially following the end of the Cold War. This influence has important repercussions on American foreign policy towards the home countries of the powerful ethnic groups and the regions that these countries are located in.

Within this context this thesis examines the sources or the reasons of the influence of ethnic interest groups on American foreign policy, which has also effected Turkish-American relations significantly. It first focuses on the structural factors that make ethnic influence possible such as the characteristics of the American political system and the important role that Congress plays in the formulation of foreign policy. It then discusses the organizational factors that make it possible to influence American foreign policy such as organizational strength and using of successful persuasion and dissuasion methods. It ends with a normative discussion on the desirability of ethnic influence on American foreign policy.

Keywords: Ethnic Interest Groups, Ethnic Lobbies, Diasporas, American Foreign Policy

ÖZ

ETNİK ÇIKAR GRUPLARI VE AMERİKAN Dİ POLİTİKASI: ETKİNİN KAYNAKLARI

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Etnik çıkar grupları tarihsel olarak Amerikan dış politikasının yapım sürecinde belirli bir rol oynamış olmakla birlikte, bu grupların etkisi özellikle Soğuk Savaşın sona ermesi ile birlikte artmıştır. Söz konusu etkinin, ABD’de yaşayan güçlü etnik toplulukların anavatanlarına ve bu ülkelerin buldukları bölgelere ilişkin Amerikan dış politikalarına dair önemli sonuçları mevcuttur.

Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmada Türk-Amerikan ilişkilerini de önemli derecede etkilemiş olan bahse konu etkinin kaynakları incelenmektedir. Bu çerçevede önce etnik grupların etkili olmasını mümkün kılan, Amerikan siyasi sisteminin hususiyetleri ve Kongre’nin dış politika yapım sürecinde oynadığı önemli rol gibi yapısal faktörler, daha sonra ise örgütsel güç, ikna ve caydırma yöntemlerinin başarıyla uygulanması gibi örgütsel faktörler incelenmekte, tez, etnik grupların Amerikan dış politikasını etkilemesinin arzu edilen bir durum olup olmadığına dair normatif tartışmayla sona ermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Etnik Çıkar Grupları, Etnik Lobiler, Diasporalar, Amerikan Dış Politikası

To My Late Father Rıza Erdoğan

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADL: Anti Defamation League

AIPAC: American Israel Public Affairs Committee

ANCA: Armenian National Committee of America

AYF: Armenian Youth Federation

CAMERA: Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America

CANF: Cuban American National Foundation

CNN: Cable News Network

FPTP: First Past the Post System

JCPA: Jewish Council for Public Affairs

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO: Non-governmental Organization

U.S.: United States

WTO: World Trade Organization

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

*Without too much exaggeration it could be stated that the immigration process is the single most important determinant of American foreign policy. This process regulates the ethnic composition of the American electorate. Foreign policy responds to that ethnic composition. It responds to other things as well, but probably **first of all** to the primal facts of ethnicity¹.*

In July 15, 1974 the long-standing problems between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have erupted into communal violence when a coup supported by the military regime in Athens overthrew the island's federal government with the aim of uniting the island with Greece. Five days later Turkey, using its treaty rights, intervened to protect the Turkish Cypriots.

The repercussions quickly affected the Greek community in the United States, which formed only about one percent of the population. Starting in mid-August, in a move orchestrated by the Greek Foreign Ministry in Athens the small yet cohesive and politically active Greek-Americans, working through the American Hellenic Institute, a coalition of Greek-American lobbies, and in cooperation with legislators of Greek descent, campaigned for an arms embargo against Turkey. Despite intensive administration lobbying, Congress voted an arms embargo, which went into effect in February 1975. All parties concerned with the issue considered the Greek lobby as the primary force behind the success of the legislation.²

¹ Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan, "Introduction" in *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, eds. Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 23-24 quoted in Paul Y. Watanabe, *Ethnic Groups, Congress, and American Foreign Policy: The Politics of the Turkish Arms Embargo* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), xii. (Emphasis in original)

² Watanabe, 172-173.

Turkey reacted to the embargo by closing down twenty-six bases and listening posts that was used by the United States and its allies. Hence due to the activities of an ethnic interest group, American strategic interests were jeopardized. In fact, on June 14, 1978, in a news conference President Carter categorized the lifting of the embargo as “the most immediate and urgent foreign policy decision” before Congress³.

In February 1996, Cuban-Americans allied in the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) persuaded Congress to pass, and president to sign, the Helms-Burton bill that extended the jurisdiction of American courts over suits brought by American citizens to defend their property rights that Castro government had nullified after 1959. The act has in practice extended the territorial application of the existing embargo to apply to foreign companies trading with Cuba, and penalized foreign companies allegedly “trafficking” in property formerly owned by U.S. citizens but expropriated by Cuba. The act has provoked much criticism in the United Nations and the European Union. In fact, the EU has even threatened to take the United States to a complaints panel of the World Trade Organization (WTO) over the extra-territorial effects of the Act. The issue has later been resolved through a negotiated “understanding.”⁴

In an effort to broaden détente and improve relations with the Soviet Union, the Nixon administration had signed a trade agreement with this country in 1972, which were to grant the Soviet Union the most-favored nation status. With the efforts of the Jewish groups, however, Congress has passed the Jackson-Vanik Amendment that tied the implementation of the agreement to the Soviet Union’s willingness to allow the emigration of Russian Jews to countries of their choice⁵. The linkage of nondiscriminatory trade with freedom of emigration so angered the

³ Charles M. Matthias, Jr., “Ethnic Groups and Foreign Policy”, *Foreign Affairs*, 59/5 (Summer 1981): 989.

⁴ Tony Smith, *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 68-69; Mick Hillyard and Vaughne Miller, *Cuba and the Helms-Burton Act*, House of Commons Library Research Paper 98/114, 14 December 1998, <http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp98/rp98-114.pdf> (accessed on January 13, 2010)

⁵ Mitchell Bard, “Ethnic Group Influence on Middle East Policy – How and When: The Cases of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment and the Sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia,” in *Ethnic Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Mohammed E. Ahrari (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987), 46-53.

Soviet Union that upon adoption of the trade act as amended, they cancelled the trade agreement and stopped payment on World War II lend-lease debts⁶.

Moreover, since 1976 Israel has been the largest annual recipient of direct U.S. economic and military assistance. It receives about \$3 billion (roughly 20% of America's foreign aid budget) in direct assistance each year. What is more, unlike other cases, it receives this amount at the start of each year and gains in interests as well. This amounts to a direct subsidy of about \$500 a year for each Israeli citizen. This generosity is widely considered to be due to the influence of the Israeli lobby⁷.

In fact, the pro-Israel lobby is considered as the most successful and in fact quintessential lobby in the United States⁸. According to Fortune magazine's report of the most powerful lobbies in Washington D.C. American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the essential part of the pro-Israel lobby, ranked the second, above such powerful lobbies as the National Rifle Association and the National Federation of Independent Business⁹. Moreover, according to Wittkopf, Kegley, and Scott "AIPAC is believed to be so powerful that its detractors claim it has made Israel America's fifty-first state."¹⁰

As the above-mentioned cases illustrate, empirical evidence suggests that ethnic interest groups have the ability to influence American foreign policy towards their ethnic kins and their home countries¹¹. Although there is no agreement among the scholars that study the issue as to the degree or the desirability of influence that

⁶ Matthias, Jr., 995.

⁷ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israeli Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 26.

⁸ Thomas Ambrosio, "Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy," in *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Thomas Ambrosio (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 11.

⁹ "The Influence Merchants", *Fortune*, 138/11 (1998):134, quoted in *Ibid*.

¹⁰ Eugene R. Wittkopf, Charles W. Kegley Jr., and James M. Scott, *American Foreign Policy: Pattern and Process*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2003), 296.

¹¹ Following Thomas Ambrosio, ethnic interest groups are defined, for the purposes of this study, as "...political organizations established along cultural, ethnic, religious, or racial lines that seek to directly and indirectly influence U.S. foreign policy in support of their homeland and/or ethnic kin abroad." (Ambrosio, *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 2.) It should be noted that in the literature the terms ethnic interest groups and ethnic lobbies are used interchangeably.

ethnic interest groups have, almost all argues that they have some degree of influence on American foreign policy, provided that they meet certain criteria. While Mearsheimer and Walt argues, for instance, that the pro-Israel lobby was able to divert America's Middle East policy from what the American national interest suggests¹², Ahrari argues, on the other hand, that Congress and president consult influential ethnic interest groups in order to use them to build support "when the objectives of that ethnic group is in harmony with the ones promoted by either branch [of the government]."¹³ Even if one adopts Ahrari's view, even his argument suggests that ethnic groups might become influential on American foreign policy through creating a mutually supportive relationship with the policymakers by, among others, presenting their demands in such a way that they are in line with the perceived national interests.

Within this context, this study will focus on the sources or the reasons of ethnic interest group influence on American foreign policy. The main research question of this thesis will be "Why are ethnic interest groups able to influence American foreign policy?" In order to answer this question, the following chapter will focus on structural sources that make this influence possible. These include, pluralism of the American democratic system, which makes, not only American politics, but also American society open to ethnic group activity; powerful role that Congress, which is considered to be more open to societal pressures due to a number of reasons, play in foreign policy making process; and last but not the least certain characteristics of the American electoral system.

In the third chapter, organizational factors (or agent-based attributes) that makes it possible for ethnic interest groups to influence American foreign policy will be focused on. These include, achievement of a certain degree of organizational unity and strength; building of alliances and countering enemies; the ability to provide intelligence to policymakers and to monitor policy making processes; establishing a congressional caucus; taking active part in election campaigns; formulating the group's message in such a way that it overlaps with the interests of the

¹² Mearsheimer and Walt, 8.

¹³ Mohammed E. Ahrari, "Conclusions," in *Ethnic Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Mohammed E. Ahrari (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987), 155.

policymakers and preferably with their version of national interest; and finally the ability of the group to be able to assimilate into American society in a certain degree but at the same time retain its ties with the homeland.

In the fourth chapter, the normative debate of whether ethnic interest group influence on American foreign policy is desirable or not will be focused on. The views of those scholars that are considered to be representative of others that expressed views on the issue will be focused on and discussed in detail.

CHAPTER II

STRUCTURAL FACTORS

To understand the reasons of the influence of ethnic interest groups on American foreign policy, it is crucial to scrutinize the political system in which these groups operate. Because no matter how well organized, how powerful an ethnic group might be, its success is ultimately determined by the structure within which it operates.

To this end, this chapter will focus on those characteristics of the American political system that makes it possible for ethnic interest groups to exert influence on American foreign policy. It will be mainly argued that the structural reasons of the influence of ethnic interest groups on American foreign policy lies in the pluralistic nature of American society and political system, the high degree of congressional involvement in foreign policy issues, and the American electoral system.

2.1. American Pluralism

The United States is a nation of immigrants with a social base that is highly diverse in ethnic, religious and cultural terms. The U.S. political system was designed to accommodate all these differences. Through a complex system of rule of law, federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances the founders of the United States have aimed at creating a system whereby one group of citizens would not be able to dominate the others. In this sense pluralism is considered to be one of the founding pillars of both the American society and the American political system.

In *Federalist* 10, one of the “founding fathers” James Madison argued that the solution to the risk of liberty leading to factionalism whereby decisions are not taken based on the public good but “by the superior force of an interested and

overbearing majority” lies in pluralism¹⁴. Accordingly, since it is not desirable to destroy liberty or give every citizen the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests, “relief [from factionalism] is only to be sought in the means of controlling its *effects*”¹⁵. For him this was possible through setting faction against faction and in so doing balancing the demands of different factions. In this sense, he argued that the more the number of factions, the easier it would be to reach a balance¹⁶.

This pluralist conception of policy making, which suggests that, much like the forming of the market price in the economic theory, the public good will be served when each group seeks to maximize its own interests, makes interest group politics perfectly normal and even desirable in American politics. According to Robert Dahl, for instance, interest groups provide valuable contributions to the development of American public policies and the health of America’s democracy. For him, thanks to interest group politics, policy outcomes mirror the nation’s collective priorities¹⁷.

As far as the ethnic groups are concerned, the rise of multiculturalism especially after the civil rights movement of the 1960s has also contributed to this pluralist approach to interest group politics¹⁸. Creation of cultural, religious, racial or ethnic groups to further the specific interests of the members of those groups have started to be considered normal by the American society. Moreover, in the era of multiculturalism, official America no longer imposes cultural assimilation upon its members and it has no emphasis on the organic community. In this sense, diasporic elites do not frequently face charges of disloyalty when promoting

¹⁴ James Madison, “Number X: the Same Subject [The Utility of the Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection] Continued” in *The Federalist Papers*, eds. James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, (London: Penguin Books, 1987), 123.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 125-128.

¹⁷ Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1961) quoted in Robert Singh, *American Government & Politics: A Concise Introduction*, (Oxford: Sage Publications, 2003) 209.

¹⁸ Smith, 38.

ancestral identities¹⁹. Although some individuals or groups criticize ethnic interest groups, among other things, of using the entire country to serve their parochial interests, they are still able to operate freely.

These basic characteristics of the American political system have facilitated the participation of ethnic interest groups in foreign policy making process in different ways. First of all, thanks to the fact that America is a nation of immigrants, it is easy for all ethnic groups to integrate into the society and, in principle they can even climb the ladder to power provided that they are successful. In other words, they are not socially or structurally excluded. Secondly, thanks to the pluralistic nature of the American democracy, it is considered normal for an ethnic group to form an interest group. Such groups are not easily blamed for being unpatriotic or forming a fifth column. Thirdly, since American political system is designed to accommodate competing interests, when compared to countries where interest group politics is not a part of the foreign policy making process, it is easier for ethnic groups to organize in such a way as to effectively influence foreign policy decisions. That is to say, ethnic groups do not have to “reinvent the wheel” to find ways to affect the foreign policy of the United States. They can easily set foot to the world of lobbies and interest groups and learn from their examples. They can even buy the services of professional lobbying firms.

2.2. Congress and the Making of U.S. Foreign Policy

American Congress has traditionally been considered to be more open to interest group influences than the executive. Because even though the president and the foreign policy establishment are by no means insulated from socio-political pressures, they are considered by most observers to be relatively less vulnerable and less responsive to the so-called domestic factor²⁰. For that matter, it is

¹⁹ Yossi Shain, “Ethnic Diasporas and U.S. Foreign Policy”, *Political Science Quarterly*, 109/5 (Winter 1994-1995): 811-812.

²⁰ Yossi Lapid, “Ethnic Mobilization and U.S. Foreign Policy: Current Trends and Conflicting Assessments,” in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry: Jews and Other Ethnic Groups in a Multi-Ethnic World (Vol III)*, ed. Ezra Mendelsohn (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 13.

generally argued that “the ethnic interest groups are more likely to be successful when the policy in question requires a congressional role”²¹.

Although it is not possible for Congress to replace the president as the central actor in American foreign policy, it tends to influence, shape and occasionally even determine the foreign policy of the United States²². Thanks to the American constitution and political system, Capitol Hill is more effective in the formulation of foreign policy vis-à-vis its counterparts in many parliamentary democracies. Understanding the role of Congress in American foreign policy making process is, therefore, key to understanding the reasons of ethnic group influence on American foreign policy.

2.2.1. Foreign Policy Powers in the American Constitution

The American constitution gives the political authority for the governance of foreign affairs to the president and Congress. Unlike most of the constitutions, however, it does not provide the actual demarcation of many responsibilities. Rather, in line with the desire of the “founding fathers” of creating a series of institutional checks and balances to see that no single branch can monopolize power, it gives overlapping responsibilities to both executive and legislative in foreign policy issues²³. Because of this extensive functional overlapping of foreign policy powers between the executive and legislative, it is argued that rather than creating “separate institutions with separate powers,” the constitution has created a system where “separate institutions share power”²⁴.

Article 2 of the constitution assigns the general executive power on foreign policy issues and the roles of commander in chief, chief negotiator, and chief diplomat to the president. Accordingly, the president “..shall have the power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties”, he/she “..shall appoint

²¹ Patrick J. Haney and Walt Vanderbush, “The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups in U.S. Foreign Policy: The Case of the Cuban American National Foundation”, *International Studies Quarterly*, 43/2 (June 1999): 345

²² Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott 404.

²³ Smith, 87.

²⁴ Jerel A. Rosati, *The Politics of United States Foreign Policy*, (Ontario: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2004), 294.

ambassadors...and shall receive ambassadors and other public ministers”. Finally, the president has the power to veto legislation²⁵.

On the other hand, article 1 assigns Congress the power to “provide for the common defence”, “to regulate commerce with foreign nations”, “to define and punish piracies and felonies committed on the high seas”, “to declare war”, “to raise and support armies”, “to provide and maintain a navy”, and “to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces”. Article 2, section 2 specifies that the Senate must give its advice and consent to all treaties and ambassadorial appointments. Congress also uses its more general powers to appropriate government funds and confirm cabinet officials with regards to the foreign policy issues²⁶.

An analysis of the U.S. constitution suggests, therefore, that “when it comes to foreign affairs Congress and the president *both* can claim ample constitutional authority”²⁷.

2.2.2. Avenues of Congressional Influence on Foreign Policy

The avenues of influence that the members of Congress can enjoy in foreign policy issues can be distinguished into legislative/non-legislative actions and direct/indirect actions (Table 1). Legislative actions are those related to the passage of specific laws or resolutions and non-legislative actions are those that do not involve a legislative output. Whereas direct actions are issue and case specific, indirect actions are aimed at influencing the broader political environment or the climate of the debate²⁸.

²⁵ Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott, 323.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ James M. Lindsay, “The Shifting Pendulum of Power: Executive-Legislative Relations on American Foreign Policy,” in *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence*, ed. Eugene R. Wittkopf and James M. McCormick (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), 200-202.

²⁸ Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott, 406.

Table 1 Avenues of Congressional Influence

	Direct	Indirect
Legislative	Issue-specific legislation Treaties (Senate) War power Appropriations Foreign commerce	Nonbinding legislation Appointments (Senate) Procedural legislation
Nonlegislative	Informal advice/letters Consultations Oversight/hearings Use of courts	Framing opinion Foreign contacts

Resource: James M. Scott, "In the Loop: Congressional Influence in American Foreign Policy," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 25/1 (1997): 47-76, quoted in Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott, 406.

Direct legislative actions that Congress may engage in include the powers to declare war, to appropriate funds, to regulate international commerce, and to ratify treaties. Direct-nonlegislative avenue, on the other hand, is used by the members of Congress to exercise influence through activities other than legislation. These include consultations and communications with the president and other administration officials, oversight activities like hearings, investigations, and fact-finding missions²⁹. Although not as powerful as direct legislative actions, direct-nonlegislative actions are also influential in that they have the ability to influence the public opinion.

Members of Congress can also use legislative approaches to provide more indirect inputs to foreign policy. In such cases, the inputs are not issue and case specific. Hence the Senate has the ability to approve or not to approve top administration personnel appointments and both houses can introduce procedural legislation, which alters processes or creates new institutions³⁰. For instance the Senate regularly intervenes to block "objectionable" nominees and this ability has also been used by some key senators to exact policy concessions in a variety of issues. For instance, in 1995 the chair of Foreign Relations Committee Jesse Helms blocked several ambassadorial and other appointments to force administration to

²⁹ Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott, 406-408.

³⁰ Eileen Burgin, "Assessing Congress' Role in the Making of Foreign Policy," in *Congress Reconsidered*, eds. Lawrence Dodd and Bruce Oppenheimer (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1997) 293-324 and James M. Lindsay, *Congress and the Politics of U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) quoted in Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott, 408.

support his plan to reorganize the State Department and other foreign policy agencies³¹.

Indirect-nonlegislative influence is the broadest of Congressional influence avenues. It is composed of different actions aimed at shaping the climate of opinion surrounding foreign policy such as participating in media programs and entering into direct contacts with foreign leaders³².

Ethnic groups have historically tried to influence Congress' decisions on all of the mentioned avenues. Many historians suggest, for instance, that members of the ethnic groups that were disappointed with the Paris peace-making of 1919 worked against Wilson, against Versailles treaty of which covenant of the League of Nations was a part and they were successful in persuading many congress members to reject the ratification of the treaty³³.

Appropriation of funds has been another important avenue of congressional influence that was used by ethnic interest groups. The American foreign aid policy is a case in point. Ethnic groups have at times tried to increase the amount of American aid to their ancestral homelands, at times they have tried to prevent Congress from approving aids to their perceived adversaries, and at times they were successful in persuading Congress members to earmark the aids to their own liking. For instance since 1976 Israel has been the largest annual recipient of direct U.S. economic and military assistance. It receives about \$3 billion (roughly 20% of America's foreign aid budget) in direct assistance each year. This amounts to a direct subsidy of about \$500 a year for each Israeli citizen. This generosity is widely considered to be due to the influence of the Israeli lobby³⁴.

Ethnic interest groups have also tried to make use of Congress' authority to regulate international commerce for their own cause. In an effort to broaden

³¹ Steven W. Hook, "The White House, Congress, and the Paralysis of the U.S. State Department," in *After the End: Making U.S. Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War World*, ed. James M. Scott (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998) 305-329 quoted in Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott, 409.

³² Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott, 409-410.

³³ DeConde, 97-98.

³⁴ Mearsheimer and Walt, 26.

détente and thereby serving the American interest in improving relations with the Soviet Union and providing positive incentives not to continue its expansionist policies in regions like the Middle East, the Nixon administration had signed a trade agreement with this country in 1972, which were to grant the Soviet Union the most-favored nation status. With the efforts of the Jewish groups, however, Congress has passed the Jackson-Vanik Amendment that tied the implementation of the agreement to the Soviet Union's willingness to allow the emigration of Russian Jews to countries of their choice³⁵. The linkage of nondiscriminatory trade with freedom of emigration so angered the Soviet Union that upon adoption of the trade act as amended, they cancelled the trade agreement and stopped payment on World War II lend-lease debts³⁶.

2.2.3. U.S. Political System and the Susceptibility of the Congressmen to Ethnic Group Influence

The constitutional assignment of powers is not, however, the only reason that makes Congress an important venue for those interest groups that seek to influence the making and conduct of American foreign policy; it is also the American political system.

The American political parties lack the discipline or organizational strength that is seen in most of the democracies. This is caused by a variety of factors. To begin with, unlike most of the political parties around the world, American political parties are not hierarchies. Rather they are agglomerations of hundreds of different leaders and committees that are distributed among various organizational layers, each of which act more or less independently. The president is the national leader of one of the parties. The parties also have their own leaders in each congressional chamber but there are also many important congressmen and governors who are considered as the party leaders within their own state and they exercise control at the local level. Secondly, political parties that are represented in Congress have low cohesion. That is, the degree to which the members of a

³⁵ Bard, *Ethnic Group Influence on Middle East Policy – How and When: The Cases of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment and the Sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia*, 46-53.

³⁶ Matthias Jr., 995.

party vote together in a given issue is low. Democrats and Republicans only rarely vote unanimously. A third factor is the increasing use of primaries in the candidate selection process. This weakens the influence of the party organization, the committees, and the chairmen³⁷. Last but not the least, leaders of the political parties have no effective disciplinary powers to force the Congressmen of their parties to vote in line with the party decision. Moreover, since all candidates should be nominated through a system of primaries, parties have no means to prevent them from being elected again³⁸.

For the purposes of this study, lack of party discipline and organizational strength have two consequences. First of all, since all candidates are nominated through primaries whose results are decided by the local electorates and since there are no disciplinary measures to provide cohesion in the way party members vote, congressmen are generally more responsive to their electorate than the presidents. Individual congress members are autonomous in deciding which position to take on foreign policy issues. Consequently, as a former official has suggested, instead of a two-party system, Capitol Hill resembles a “535 party system”³⁹.

A second consequence of the weakness of the party system is that American political parties play a less important role in interest articulation and aggregation than its counterparts in other countries. Consequently, interest groups play a major role in interest articulation and aggregation in the United States⁴⁰. Resulting high level of activity of organized political groups makes it easier and socially acceptable for ethnic groups to form pressure groups and actively participate in foreign policy making.

Members of the congress are better targets for the interest groups than the president because all 435 members of the House and a third of the members of the Senate are up for reelection every two years. And since “...the easiest means of

³⁷ Alan R. Grant, *The American Political Process*, (London: Routledge, 2004), 184, 188.

³⁸ Ranney, 769-770.

³⁹ Cecil V. Crabb Jr. and M. Holt Pat, *Invitation to Struggle*, (Washington DC: CQ Press, 1992) quoted in Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott, 430.

⁴⁰ Ranney, 760-761.

access for citizens to the political system is through those positions most exposed to direct public pressure,”⁴¹ this continuous preoccupation of Congressmen with re-election makes them more open to ethnic influence.

Another effect of this continuous preoccupation with reelection is the pressure that it creates on Congressmen to focus more on domestic issues rather than the international ones. Due to this pressure, which leads to parochialism, members of Congress tend to see every issue from the perspective of its potential contribution to their reelection and so from the perspectives of their own constituencies. The response of Henry Stimson, who used to be the chair of the House Naval Affairs Committee at the beginning of the 20th century to the question “whether it was true that the navy yard in his district was too small to accommodate the latest battleships” is an excellent example of such parochialism that shape the approaches of many of the Congressmen: “That is true, and that is the reason I have always been in favor of small ships”⁴².

The Congressional committee system, where the institution’s real work is done also reinforces parochialism. Members of Congress select the committees that they want to serve in based on the extent of its contribution to the prospects of their reelection. Consequently, for instance representative of a state whose economy is dependent on agriculture want to serve in agriculture committees⁴³. In this sense, focusing on foreign policy issues is considered to be “an investment with low return” for most of the Congressmen. As King and Pomper argues:

Usually, investing one’s time in foreign policy brings a bad return back home because the constituents sitting around neighborhood haunts like Uncommon Grounds are likely to be talking about education, roads, jobs, and clean water. Focusing on foreign policy is a political liability for members of Congress – except in communities with a politically active diaspora.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Smith 93.

⁴² Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott, 428.

⁴³ Ibid., 428.

⁴⁴ David King and Miles Pomper, “The U.S. Congress and the Contingent Influence of Diaspora Lobbies: Lessons from U.S. Policy Toward Armenia and Azerbaijan” *Journal of Armenian Studies*, VIII/1 (Summer 2004): 13.

Due to this “low profit” nature of dealing with foreign policy issues, in general the congressmen who participate in commissions on foreign affairs are more likely to represent districts that are ethnically diverse⁴⁵. What is more, thanks to the seniority system in Congress committees, it is difficult for newcomers to take over the posts of these congressmen⁴⁶. This means that ethnic interest groups are able to secure the most important positions that are needed to influence Congress’ foreign policy approach.

Ethnic interest groups have also used Congress’ lack of expertise on foreign policy issues to influence congressional foreign policy decisions. In order to overcome this lack of expertise Congress has increased the size of its professional staff serving the committees and it has also increased the reporting requirements on almost every related bureaucratic agency⁴⁷. Despite these developments, however, given the large number and diversity of issues confronting a congressional staff, it is impossible for staffers to invest sufficient time to research issues themselves. Consequently, they are forced to rely on outside sources of information and ethnic interest groups, whose expertise of issues relating to their homeland are unmatched by Congressional staffers, provide this information with an analysis beneficial to their agenda⁴⁸.

As the above-mentioned factors suggest, the nature of the American political system is one of the most important reasons why ethnic interest groups are able to influence American foreign policy. Thanks to all these characteristics of the U.S. political system, the demands of ethnic interest groups are represented in Congress asymmetrically.

2.2.4. Shifting Pendulum of Power: Congress, President and the Making of American Foreign Policy

⁴⁵ Ambrosio, *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 13.

⁴⁶ Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott, 432.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 431-432

⁴⁸ Ambrosio, *Ibid.*, 2.

Although Congress has important foreign policy powers, the extent to which they are used vary depending on Congress – president relations. In other words, the contest between the president and Congress has important practical implications for ethnic groups. As it is discussed earlier, ethnic interest groups are likely to be relatively weak if foreign policy making powers are lodged in one or a few hands in the government. They will be more vigorous, however, if there are many officials involved in decision-making, each with his legally or constitutionally protected sphere of authority⁴⁹. For that matter, “attempts to widen or contract the foreign policymaking activity of Congress have a clear impact on the avenues available for ethnic groups to influence the formulation of policy”⁵⁰.

Historically, the balance between Congress and the president in terms of foreign policy issues has shifted towards president in times of international crises and war, and towards Congress in times of peace:

When Americans believe they face few external threats-or think that international engagement could itself produce a threat-they see less merit in deferring to the White House on foreign policy and more merit to congressional activism. Debate and disagreement are not likely to pose significant costs; after all, the country is secure. But when Americans believe the country faces an external threat, they quickly convert to the need for strong presidential leadership. Congressional dissent that was previously acceptable suddenly looks to be unhelpful meddling at best and unpatriotic at worst.⁵¹

This cyclical pattern can be observed throughout the whole American history but for the purposes of this study, we will only focus on executive-legislative relations after the post World War II era.

American participation in World War II resulted in a major expansion of the national security bureaucracy and the presidential power in foreign policy.

⁴⁹ James Q. Wilson, *Political Organizations*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973) quoted in Watanabe 28.

⁵⁰ Watanabe, 44.

⁵¹ Lindsay, 202.

Although in the immediate aftermath of the war Congress began to reassert its authority in foreign policy, the start of the Cold War has shifted the balance⁵².

During the Cold War foreign policy was marked by bipartisanship, which was fundamentally characterized by a consensus over goals, purposes, and means of U.S. foreign policy. This consensus was made possible by the clarity of the perceived threat against the United States. During this era, thanks to the above-mentioned consensus, Congress generally deferred to presidential leadership⁵³. In fact, the Cold War consensus and bipartisanship were so supportive of the president that foreign policy decisions were in many cases made without consulting Congress. This congressional acquiescence was mainly based on the belief that “the speed of war had outstripped a democracy’s capacity to debate it”⁵⁴. This phase is widely considered as one of “imperial presidency”.

Following the failure of American foreign policy in Vietnam, however, the Cold War consensus was shattered and members of Congress began to seek greater roles in the shaping of American foreign policy. For instance in 1970, Congress “repealed” the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that gave President Johnson a “blank check” in Vietnam; in 1973, with a move that is often considered as the peak of congressional activism, It overrode President Nixon’s veto to write the “War Powers Resolution” into law, thus required the president to consult Congress before dispatching troops abroad and allowed Congress to stop a war at any time by passing a concurrent resolution; and in 1982 Congress denied the Defense Department and the CIA funds for the purpose of overthrowing Nicaragua’s government⁵⁵.

With the heightened congressional assertiveness, the influence of ethnic interest groups on American foreign policy has also increased during this phase. For instance in 1974, despite continuous opposition from the administration, Congress embargoed arms sales to Turkey, one of the most important Cold War allies in

⁵² Rosati, 296.

⁵³ Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott, 434.

⁵⁴ Rosati, 300.

⁵⁵ Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott, 435.

Eastern Europe because of its intervention in Cyprus. Watanabe argues that success of the Greek lobby in this case was in part made possible due to the competition between the presidency and Congress over the foreign policy issues. Although Congressmen had different reasons in supporting the embargo, the general willingness of the members of Congress to be assertive in foreign policy issues also encouraged their support⁵⁶.

With the end of Cold War, the perception of external threat receded and the consensus this had created was no longer functional. In this phase American foreign policy makers opened the door for greater assertiveness, mostly because the American public was now more likely to tolerate legislative dissent on foreign affairs⁵⁷. Hence, the end of the Cold War

...created unprecedented opportunities for interest groups in general, and ethnic identity groups in particular, to influence the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy. Ethnic lobbies have been adept at exploiting this upheaval in order to promote the interests of their ethnic kin and national homeland⁵⁸.

Although during the first Gulf War and in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks there have been two periods of presidential primacy, congressional assertiveness in foreign policy still continues to this date⁵⁹.

2.3. American Electoral System and Ethnic Group Influence

American electoral system has certain characteristics that afford ethnic groups opportunities to influence the outcome. Majoritarian nature of the election system, extensive use of primaries in the selection of candidates, crucial importance of financial contributions in winning the elections, and low election participation rates all give organized groups important advantages to affect the process to their own liking.

⁵⁶ Watanabe, 26.

⁵⁷ Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott, 437.

⁵⁸ Ambrosio, Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy, 8.

⁵⁹ Rosati, 303.

The electoral system used in the United States is the plurality system in single-member constituencies (often referred to as the First Past the Post System – FPTP). In both presidential and congressional elections the candidate who gets the majority of the votes wins the election⁶⁰. This system is advantageous for organized groups because it turns the elections into a zero-sum game. Since a relatively small number of votes in a state can determine who wins that states' votes, it affords well-organized minorities a chance to influence the result⁶¹.

At a first glance one may doubt the importance of ethnic voting. After all Jews are only 3 percent, Greeks 1 percent, Cubans and Armenians at most 0.5 percent of the American population. But for instance Jews are 9 percent of the population of New York, likewise number of Albanian Americans may be small but they constitute about 17 percent of one congressional district in New York⁶². Given the fact that these groups have a high participation rate, their voting impact is well beyond what the number of voters suggests.

For instance, in the year 2000 as the campaign season for the American presidential elections unfolded, a young boy, Elian Gonzales reached Florida after his mother was lost at sea while trying to escape from Cuba. The question of whether to return him to his father or not has become an enormously popular issue that captivated America's attention for weeks. While Democratic candidate Al Gore sought the resolution of the issue in family court, from the very beginning Republican candidate George W. Bush supported the Cuban-Americans' conviction that Elian should remain in the United States. It is argued by some observers that Bush's narrow and controversial victory in Florida, which eventually led him win the presidency, may have been decided by the Cuban-American community⁶³.

In the United States, candidates for public office are not named by the party but nominated through primaries. This has important consequences regarding the

⁶⁰ Rosati, 77.

⁶¹ Singh, 81-82.

⁶² Ibid., 99.

⁶³ Wittkopf, Kegley Jr., and Scott, 296-297.

impact of ethnic interest groups. Since aspirants owe their election to their constituents rather than the party and since who is qualified to vote in a particular party's primary is determined not by party rules but by public laws, they cannot ignore the demands of their electors⁶⁴. Moreover, primaries increase the amount of money and man power required to win an election. All these factors increase the value of organized groups that have the ability to mobilize its members to vote, do voluntary work, and make financial contributions⁶⁵.

It is a costly enterprise to run in American elections because due to primaries the election process is lengthy, with a loose party system every candidate needs to establish his/her own organization, employ experts, conducts frequent polls to test their strategies, and use expensive TV commercials extensively. Moreover, there are no public funds given to those other than the presidential candidates and even in these cases the amount is far from being sufficient to cover all the expenses⁶⁶. These factors make American elections at every level a race for funds. It is widely known that ethnic groups are important contributors for different candidates. Smith argues that it is impossible to establish who contributed what and why because contributions are often made through foundations or businesses that are connected to an official or to his or her immediate family. Based on anecdotal evidence he argues that when Michael Dukakis ran for the presidency in 1988, almost a quarter of his financial backing came from Greek-Americans⁶⁷. Likewise, *the Washington Post* once estimated that Democratic presidential candidates 'depend on Jewish supporters to supply as much as 60 percent of the money'⁶⁸. In short, financial needs of the candidates to conduct a successful campaign make them open to the influence of ethnic interest groups.

Another important factor that makes organized groups important in the elections is the low voter turnout rates witnessed in the American elections. According to

⁶⁴ Ranney, 760.

⁶⁵ Grant, 188.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 171; Ranney 765.

⁶⁷ Smith, 106-107.

⁶⁸ Thomas B. Edsall and Alan Cooperman, "GOP Uses Remarks to Court Jews" *Washington Post*, 13.03.2003 quoted in Mearsheimer and Walt, 163.

U.S. Census Bureau data, average national voter turnout rate has been 50.45% over the last 10 years (see Table 2). U.S. voter turnout rates are very low in comparative terms as well. According to a survey, United States has the second lowest turnout rate among the 24 democracies that were surveyed⁶⁹. This low voter turnout gives an important advantage to organized groups who can persuade their members to vote for the candidate of their choice. In fact, given the potential power of ethnic voting blocs, both the Republican and Democratic parties have what may be called “nationalities sections” since 1880s⁷⁰.

Table 2 Reported Voting and Registration in the Last 10 U.S. Elections

<i>Year</i>	<i>Voting (total percent)</i>	<i>Registration (total percent)</i>
2008	58,2	64,9
2006	43,6	61,6
2004	58,3	65,9
2002	42,3	60,9
2000	54,7	63,9
1998	41,9	62,1
1996	54,2	65,9
1994	45,0	62,5
1992	61,3	68,2
1990	45,0	62,2

Resource: “Reported Voting and Registration by Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, and Age Groups: November 1964 to 2008”, *U.S. Census Bureau*, <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/publications/historical/tabA-1.xls> (accessed on November 24, 2009).

⁶⁹ Philip John Davies, “Motivating the US ‘motor voter’”, *Politics Review*, February 2009, 26-29 quoted in Grant, 242.

⁷⁰ Smith, 98.

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS

No matter how permeable or pluralistic a political system is, the success of the ethnic interest groups is also dependent on the way the group is organized and the strategies that are adapted. A review of the literature on ethnic groups and U.S. foreign policy and the successful cases of ethnic group influence suggests a number of common factors which are requisite for the success of ethnic interest groups.

3.1. Organizational Unity and Strength

In order to formulate strategies, utilize resources, coordinate and perform the task of having favorable policy outcomes, an ethnic group must have an effective organizational network. It is only through such networks that ethnic interest groups can concentrate money, human resources, energy and power for the achievement of a given purpose. In the words of Harmon Zeigler “If one could equalize all other factors it could be said that interests which are supported by organizations have a better chance of success than interests which do not enjoy the participation of organizations.”⁷¹ In this sense, having a solid organizational structure is a *sine quo non* for the effectiveness of any ethnic interest group. Able led organizations may help compensate for certain deficiencies and may make it possible for even relatively small ethnic groups to wield considerable influence⁷².

Absence of organizational strength, on the other hand, makes it very difficult for a group to be influential no matter how big it is. For instance in October 1996 around 30,000 Latinos protested before the Capitol but the group’s lack of institutional backbone was readily apparent in the unreality of its demands,

⁷¹ Harmon Zeigler, *Interest Groups in American Society* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 32 quoted in Watanabe, 69.

⁷² Watanabe, 69.

absence of important Latino figures in front and in fact the protest was largely forgotten within a year. Likewise the Million Man March that was organized by Louis Farrakhan in 1995 manifested a gap between the African-American leadership and the community it claimed to represent. In fact, both communities have far less influence in American foreign policy than they are supposed to with respect to their sizes⁷³.

The organizations that are essential for the success of ethnic groups are the political ethnic organizations which are typically supported by full-time professional staffs that usually have the official status of lobbyists and work in Washington D.C. Thanks to these professional staffs ethnic groups establish contacts in the White House, with congressional staffs as well as with legislators, and with the media. This guarantees that a lobby can help orchestrate the actions of its supporters and anticipate the moves of its opponents. It should be noted, however, that organizations that operate primarily in the cultural, educational, religious, and social areas are also potentially significant contributors in the effort of gaining influence in foreign policymaking circles, in the media, in the public, and in the ranks of the ethnic community itself⁷⁴.

Needless to say, the activities of the ethnic group should not be limited to a certain time period. Only through a persistent effort that a group can have functional relations with the policymaking circles, establish channels to provide and receive intelligence, and shape the public opinion on relevant issues. In short, ad hoc efforts of influencing American foreign policy have much less chance of success than consistent and organized efforts.

Another very important characteristic of organizationally strong ethnic interest groups is the achievement of political and organizational unity. Severe internal power struggles within and among organizations diminish the credibility of anyone's assertion that it is representative of community attitudes. For that matter, it is important that the relations between various organizations within a particular ethnic group are not destructive. Through such measures as forming of coalitions,

⁷³ Smith, 116.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 122; Watanabe, 70.

creation of an umbrella organization or an arrangement that combines the first two an ethnic community must maintain relative unity⁷⁵. Since disunity can be exploited by opponents, even ethnic groups that fail to have the desired degree of unity should keep the intra-group rivalries private and not made public.

Organizations serve a variety of functions ranging from interest articulation to raising funds, creation of a corps of committed political activists to educating their members on issues that are of interest to the ethnic community. They facilitate contacts among more or less like-minded ethnic community members and both reflect and encourage ethnic group awareness and activism⁷⁶. They serve in convincing ethnic group members that the activities that they are asked to engage in or support are legitimate and that the policies encouraged are reasonable⁷⁷. Most importantly, they play an important role in the preservation of the ethnic identity of a group and upholding of the group's causes by the new generations.

Armenian-American community is a good case in point. Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) uses a website and e-mails to inform its members, circulate position papers, publishes a monthly: "TransCaucasus: A Chronology", and they have close ties with the *Hairenik* and *Armenian Weekly* newspapers. Likewise Armenian Assembly of America uses newsletters, e-mails, "action alerts", and their websites to inform government officials, members of Congress, scholars, foreign policy analysts, and Armenian-Americans of important issues. Moreover, American Armenian Diaspora has two research institutes (The Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation, and Armenian National Institute) that undertake studies on Armenian people and raise public awareness of the so-called Armenian Genocide⁷⁸.

⁷⁵ Watanabe, 57, 72-73.

⁷⁶ Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960), 199-204 quoted in *Ibid.*, 69.

⁷⁷ Watanabe, 56.

⁷⁸ Heather S. Gregg, "Divided They Conquer: The Success of Armenian Ethnic Lobbies in the U.S." *Precis*, (Fall 2001) 18. (For more information on ANCA and the Armenian Assembly of America please visit: <http://www.anca.org/> and <http://www.aaainc.org/>)

Another important activity of the Armenian-American community is the mobilization of the Armenian-American youth. To this aim ANCA support the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) whose primary objective is to “keep Armenians Armenian” and “instilling in them pride in their heritage”. Towards this aim AYF gives courses on Armenian history and issues, teaches Armenian language, offers college scholarships for its members, organizes Olympics between different regions and branches of the organization annually, and last but not the least it organizes a summer camp that hosts hundreds of young Armenian-Americans each year⁷⁹.

Similarly the Assembly organizes a summer internship program that pairs college students with members of Congress, federal agencies, NGOs, media outlets, and think tanks. Moreover Armenian General Benevolence Union runs 24 primary, secondary, and preparatory schools and international “Saturday schools”, summer camps, and last but not the least it has a Young Professional’s Club in Los Angeles that serves as an international network of young Armenian professionals⁸⁰.

A final factor that affects an ethnic interest group organization’s success is the existence of an indigenous support base. In other words their base of support should be rooted in the United States. In cases of relying on professional lobbyists and public relations firms, it is rather easier for critics to defame those professionals as the representatives of a foreign power. In contrast, when ethnic group activity is conducted by the members of the group itself, their actions are considered as manifestation of the political activism of a subset of American citizens and so as a legitimate form of political activity⁸¹.

3.2. Alliance Building and Fighting Opponents

It is important for ethnic groups to match their own interests with the goals and needs of an influential segment of the foreign policymaking community.

⁷⁹ Gregg, 15.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁸¹ Mearsheimer and Walt, 144.

Successful wedding of interests of policymakers and ethnic groups, which can take a variety of forms, boost the opportunities for successful ethnic group influence considerably. Besides generating support, this also prevents the dominance of an issue by purely narrow ethnic interests. In the case of Turkish arms embargo, for instance, Greek-American organizations' criticism of the administration's Cyprus policy found support among congressmen that were unhappy with the concentration of foreign policy decision making in the hands of the presidency. Congressmen that had developed a certain dislike for Secretary of State Henry Kissinger were also among those who had supported the Greek-American case⁸².

Likewise, studying the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), Haney and Vanderbush, contend that "the Reagan administration encouraged and supported the emergence and growth of CANF as a smart political move to help further its policy interests"⁸³. CANF was seen instrumental in popularizing the Reagan administration's policies and persuading the opposition in Congress. To this end Reagan administration has assisted CANF in many respects. For instance it funded Radio and TV Marti, the exile stations that in effect CANF ran, it even outsourced the responsibility of processing the entrance of Cuban exiles from third countries to CANF⁸⁴.

Needless to say, successful execution of the alliance building task requires a good understanding of the values, interests, and needs of the policymakers. In order to find policymakers whose interests overlap with the ethnic group, it is crucial that the group accurately identifies the predispositions of the key policymakers. This makes it possible for them to adopt specific approaches for specific persons⁸⁵. This can only be done through continuous efforts of the political organization (or the lobbying apparatus) of the group, which necessitates once again the existence of a strong organization.

⁸² Watanabe, 51-52.

⁸³ Haney and Vanderbush, 350.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 353.

⁸⁵ Watanabe, 52.

In order to be successful in influencing American foreign policy, besides official policy making circles ethnic groups should also find allies from other interest groups, media, businesses, trade unions, think-tanks and other organizations that are important in the forming of public opinion⁸⁶. Towards this end the Mexican lobby works closely with the Catholic church, some business organizations, and the Ford Foundation; the pro-Israel lobby promotes ties with Christian right; Greeks, Greek Cypriots and Lebanese communities act with Armenian-Americans; pro-Israel lobby at times support Turkish causes; and last but not the least East European Americans work with one another⁸⁷.

Building alliances with other interest groups is favorable not only because it increases the support that might be received from the policy makers, but also because it increases the legitimacy of the issue at hand. Having an alliance suggests that more than just one self-interested minority favors a policy⁸⁸.

It should be noted, however, that these coalitions tend to be ad hoc because they are usually built upon a very narrow range of concerns. Groups remain within a coalition only as long as their interests and needs coincide. In other words, “coalitions among lobbying groups designed to further a desired piece of legislation rarely last beyond the day the president signs the bill and sometimes break up before that”⁸⁹.

The other side of the coin is the countering of enemies. This usually takes the form of dissuasion, which is defined as the process through which supporters of the other side is discouraged from active opposition and encouraged to switch sides⁹⁰. Dissuasion can be done in a variety of ways such as by discrediting the

⁸⁶ Watanabe, 55.

⁸⁷ Gregg, 13; Smith, 119.

⁸⁸ Lester W. Milbrath, *The Washington Lobbyists*, (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), 169 quoted in Watanabe, 65-66.

⁸⁹ James Q. Wilson, *Political Organizations* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 271 quoted in Watanabe, 66.

⁹⁰ Roger W. Cobb and Charles D. Elder, *Participation in America: The Dynamics of Agenda-building*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 97. quoted in Mohammed E. Ahrari, “Domestic Context of U.S. Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East,” in *Ethnic Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Mohammed E. Ahrari (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987), 4-5.

cause of an opponent by linking the cause with some distasteful symbol, which would undermine the group's cause by changing the perceptions of both general public and policymakers. These include labeling of a group as "outside agitators", "subversives", "communist-inspired" and alike⁹¹.

The response of the Israeli Lobby to former American President Jimmy Carter's book *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* is a case in point. According to Mearsheimer and Walt, although Carter's ultimate goal is peace between Israeli and Palestinian nations and he unambiguously defends Israel's right to live in peace and security, and despite the fact that even a prominent Israeli politician, Yossi Beilin, noted that "There is nothing in the criticism that Carter has for Israel that has not been said by Israelis themselves"⁹², a number of pro-Israel groups launched a smear campaign against Carter. Due to his suggestion that Israel's policies in the Occupied Territories resemble South Africa's apartheid regime, he was publicly accused of being an anti-Semite, a "Jew-hater", some critics charged him with being a Nazi-sympathizer, and one even suggested that there was a strong similarity between Carter's views and those of former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke. Anti Defamation League (ADL) and the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA) attacked Carter's book in advertisements that they have published in major newspapers⁹³.

Successful efforts of dissuasion can even lead to turning politicians who have been critical of an ethnic group's home country into supporters. For instance, after AIPAC channeled large amounts of campaign money to his opponent, former Senator Jesse Helms who has been an outspoken critic of the U.S. foreign aid program to Israel was able to win the race for reelection only by a small margin. Following this Senator Helms became a vocal supporter of Israel and remained so until his retirement⁹⁴.

⁹¹ Ahrari, *Domestic Context of U.S. Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East*, 5, 16.

⁹² Yossi Beilin, "The Case for Carter", *Forward*, January 16, 2007. quoted in Mearsheimer and Walt, 193.

⁹³ Mearsheimer and Walt, 9, 193.

⁹⁴ Lucille Barnes, "Retiring Sen. Jesse Helms Caved to Pro-Israel Lobby Halfway Through His Career," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, (March 2002):34-36; and Tom Hamburger

In fact, using electoral means to fight a group's opponents is a common and legitimate method of dissuasion used not only by ethnic groups but by other interest groups as well. There are many instances, for instance, where AIPAC worked hard to ensure the defeat of congressional candidates that they considered to be against their cause. In 1982 Jewish voters reportedly donated 90% of the funds raised to defeat Representative Paul Findlay and in 1984 AIPAC targeted Senator Rogers Jepsen and Senator Charles Percy, in each case because the candidate has supported anti-Israel positions in Congress⁹⁵. Following the above-mentioned cases, an AIPAC executive has reportedly said that the memories of the defeat of Senator Jepsen and Percy has swayed senators against Jordan and Saudi arms sales, especially those facing reelection⁹⁶.

3.3. Intelligence Provision and Policy Monitoring

It is important for ethnic groups to serve as information providers for policymakers. Ethnic groups are usually the best sources of information about developments that take place in their home country and in areas that they are interested in. In this sense they can perform an educative role by using their unique perspectives and resources to supply documents, reports, speeches and other kinds of information to policymakers and their staffers.⁹⁷

The information should be accurate, original and should reflect expertise. Moreover, it should compare favorably with information made available by alternative branches such as government agencies and other lobbying groups. Groups that always communicate insightful, credible, and original information enhance their reputations as a valuable information source. Groups that consistently meet these standards may play a very important role in the

and Jim VandeHei, "Chosen People: How Israel Became a Favorite Cause of Christian Right," *Wall Street Journal*, May 23, 2002 quoted in Mearsheimer and Walt 159.

⁹⁵ Smith 121.

⁹⁶ Hedrick Smith, *The Power Game: How Washington Works* (New York: Random House, 1988), 230 quoted in Smith 121.

⁹⁷ Watanabe 62.

policymaking process by participating in the actual wording of many resolutions and legislative proposals⁹⁸. For instance according to an AIPAC staffer:

It is common for members of Congress and their staffs to turn to AIPAC first when they need information, before calling the Library of Congress, the Congressional Research Service, committee staff or administration experts. We are often called upon to draft speeches, work on legislation, advice on tactics, perform research, collect co-sponsors and marshal votes⁹⁹.

Although provision of information is a power in itself due simply to the fact that defining the limits of the information that the policymakers have means, in a way, defining the limits of their repertoire, it is also useful for establishing a communication channel through which groups can receive important information from the government officials. Through this communication channel policymakers make their views known but more importantly provide reliable and consistent information on the thoughts and activities of officials¹⁰⁰.

This communication might take place through such intermediaries as media and other interest groups or it might take the form of personal contacts between ethnic activists and policymakers. Close personal contacts are especially important not only because, as the AIPAC case suggests, policymakers become open to the influence of an ethnic group that they consider to be reliable, but also because motivated officials can have a tremendous influence in promoting a particular policy or getting support from other policymakers. It is suggested by congressmen that the position of Congress is usually determined by a relatively small number of congressman who are very active and interested in a particular foreign policy question¹⁰¹.

Given the fact that congressional staffers play a key role in formulation of policy and strategy, and that since they have “the ear of their bosses” ethnic groups often

⁹⁸ Ibid., 62-63.

⁹⁹ Camille Mansour, *Beyond Alliance: Israel and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 241 quoted in Smith 123-124.

¹⁰⁰ Watanabe, 63-64.

¹⁰¹ House Committee on International Relations, *Congress and Foreign Policy. Hearings Before the Special Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on International Relations*, 94th Congress, 2nd session, June 17, 22, and 29; July 1, 20, 22, and 28; August 24; and September 16 and 22, 1976, p.244 quoted in Watanabe, 64.

aim many of their appeals to these people¹⁰². It is also very important that an ethnic group has some of its members appointed as congressional staffers. For instance Morris Amitay, a former head of AIPAC, has once noted that:

There are a lot of guys at the working level up here [in the Congress]...who happen to be Jewish, who are willing...to look at certain issues in terms of their Jewishness...These are all guys who are in a position to make the decision in these areas for those senators...You can get an awful lot done just at the staff level.¹⁰³

Being able to receive intelligence makes the important task of policy monitoring possible for ethnic groups. Getting close to the locus of the decision making gives an ethnic group the advantage to access information before the general public and this serves as an early warning system that makes it possible for the groups to act quickly and early in cases of importance to them¹⁰⁴. As Smith puts it, effective ethnic lobbies identify possible problems and begin to deal with them long before public attention is focused on an issue¹⁰⁵. This can happen through the use of contacts in the White House, congressional staffs, lawmakers that have the same ethnic background or alternatively through penetrating the government apparatus, which may happen when a group succeeds in getting one of its “allies” appointed to a high position within the government, which Mearsheimer and Walt argue is one of the strengths of the Israel lobby¹⁰⁶. Needless to say, this kind of access is only possible through an institutionally effective lobby.

Another side of monitoring is the following up of the reactions of policymakers and public officials. Especially in the cases of strong organizations, it is important that monitoring is done with mathematical scoring and that the sums are published on easily accessible web sites¹⁰⁷. This way, groups can create a collective memory that makes it possible for them to award or punish policymakers especially during

¹⁰² Watanabe 64-65.

¹⁰³ Mitchell Bard, “Israeli Lobby Power”, *Midstream* 33/1 (January 1987):8 quoted in Mearsheimer and Walt, 153.

¹⁰⁴ Mearsheimer and Walt, 165-67.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, 123.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 122-123; Mearsheimer and Walt 165-167.

¹⁰⁷ Smith, 122.

the election times. In fact, according to Watanabe policy monitoring is a key area that differentiates well-established groups from ad hoc policy advocacy groups: “The successful performance of this duty often represents the crucial difference between groups that are able to maintain ongoing influence and advocacy of policy alternatives and groups that are limited in the scope and duration of their efforts.”¹⁰⁸

3.4. Establishing a Congressional Caucus

According to Hammond, one of the first marks of a politically successful diaspora community is the creation of a congressional caucus chaired by a member of Congress¹⁰⁹. Officially known as Congressional Member Organizations, caucuses are informal legislative committees founded by members of Congress who pursue common legislative objectives¹¹⁰.

Congressional caucuses play an important role in both intelligence provision and monitoring functions. They are aimed at having significant political players in Congress committed to the agenda of an ethnic community. This serves, among other things, to making the ethnic group a part of the political system and gives them a place at the table where decisions are made¹¹¹. Historically there have been a variety of ethnic interest group caucuses such as Irish, Greek, Jewish, Armenian, Turkish, Albanian, Nigerian, Sri Lankan.

3.5. Electoral Effectiveness

Having an electoral impact is central to the degree of influence that an ethnic group has on American policymaking process. As we have discussed in the previous chapter American political system gives organized groups that have the ability to provide votes, manpower, and financial resources a great capacity to influence American politics. Although it is not easy for ethnic groups to impact

¹⁰⁸ Watanabe, 54.

¹⁰⁹ Susan Webb Hammond, *Congressional Caucuses in National Policymaking*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) quoted in King and Pomper, 70.

¹¹⁰ The Committee on House Administration – Congressional Member Organization, available at: http://cha.house.gov/member_orgs.aspx (accessed on 16 December 2009).

¹¹¹ Smith, 123.

nationwide political campaigns, they can be influential in certain districts where their members are densely populated. Because of various characteristics of the American political system, well positioned ethnic groups with politically active members might be very influential if they vote as a bloc¹¹². In this sense, geographically concentrated ethnic groups may have a rather asymmetric degree of influence on U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis their population.

For example, although Asian-Americans constitute roughly three percent of the U.S. population they constitute nearly 10 percent of the population of southern California and 15 percent of the San Francisco Bay area. Similarly, Hispanics account for roughly nine percent of the national population, but they comprise one-third of the population of south California, one-third of the population of south Florida and one-quarter of the population of Texas. Since as Michael Clough puts it “The more localized foreign policy becomes, the more likely that ethnic ties will influence the debate, especially as more blacks, Hispanics and Asians are elected to local and state political offices”¹¹³, geographic concentration is crucial for the success of ethnic interest groups.

For instance Armenian-Americans have successfully used their high concentration in the 8th congressional district of Massachusetts (Watertown) to “educate” their representatives on the Armenian issues. Hence, according to King and Pomper John. F. Kennedy, who was elected from this district to the House of Representatives “...proved finely attuned to Armenian issues throughout his years in the U.S. Senate and the White House.” Likewise his successor Tip O’neill, who served ten years as the Speaker of the House, considered Armenian issues and especially the recognition of the so-called Armenian Genocide as a “quintessentially local concern”. As a result both before and after becoming the House Speaker he routinely introduced legislation to mark 24 April as the day of remembrance for the victims of the so-called genocide¹¹⁴.

¹¹² Haney and Vanderbush, 344.

¹¹³ Michael Clough, “Grass-Roots Policymaking: Say Good-Bye to the ‘Wise Men’”, *Foreign Affairs*, 73/1 (January - February 1994): 5.

¹¹⁴ King and Pomper, 70.

Likewise, it is persuasively argued that one of the most important advantages of the pro-Israeli groups has been the Jewish-American concentration in America's most politically powerful and wealthiest states such as New York, California, Florida, and Illinois. These bases permitted the pro-Israeli groups to exert pressure on Washington in an effective manner without any effort wasted due to geographical dispersal¹¹⁵.

Making financial contributions to the candidates that an ethnic group would like to support either because the candidate is close to that group's views or because he/she is running against an "enemy" is also crucial for the electoral effectiveness of an ethnic group. In fact, using this financial leverage efficiently makes an ethnic group so influential that even those officeholders who do not benefit from the support of that ethnic group fear taking that group as an adversary. Hence it is argued, for instance, that Richard M. Nixon "was convinced that he owed nothing to Jewish votes and that he could not increase his Jewish support regardless of what he did. [yet he respected] the strength of Israel's support in Congress and in public opinion generally"¹¹⁶.

The key factor that makes the ability of making financial contributions a very important determinant of an ethnic group's overall impact is the financing regulations that make it possible to make contributions to those outside of one's own district. With their contributions, even small ethnic groups that lack voting strength may find politicians that are willing to represent or support their interests. In 1996 congressional elections, for instance, the senatorial contest of South Dakota had become a battleground for Indian and Pakistani Americans but neither groups had a sizeable population in this state¹¹⁷.

Electoral influence of ethnic groups is boosted by the desire of some policymakers that seek support from particular ethnic communities by propagating positions that

¹¹⁵ DeConde, 165.

¹¹⁶ Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1982), 202 and William B. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 93 quoted in DeConde, 21.

¹¹⁷ Smith, 101-102.

are likely to elicit such support¹¹⁸. This is the case especially for such groups as Armenian-Americans and Jewish-Americans who are considered to be important contributors. For instance former House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Lee Hamilton, D-Indiana, said: Armenian-Americans “established such a reputation for giving political contributions that candidates would come to them seeking support. They became a stopping point for many congressional candidates”¹¹⁹. Likewise Jewish-American organizations are one of the usual stops for candidates seeking electoral support because it is widely argued that “Jews give like no other group in society”¹²⁰.

Last but not the least, it should also be noted that other than providing voting blocs and financial contributions, ethnic groups can also be influential in the electoral process by providing political activists that take part in electoral campaigns and by joining coalitions with other groups that are inclined to vote in similar ways to increase their electoral impact¹²¹.

3.6. Salience and Resonance of the Message

It is important for ethnic interest groups to be able to demonstrate that the policies they advocate are not purely representative of their parochial interests, that they are in line with the U.S. national interests. To this end, ethnic groups should formulate their interests and more importantly their message in such a way that they can stress the compatibility between their positions and the overall public interest. In the absence of strong indications that the views represented by ethnic groups are “reasonable interpretations of national interest”, it is hardly possible for ethnic groups to be able to promote their own agenda¹²². Moreover, an ethnic interest group should be fully committed to key American values such as human rights and democracy. This commitment is considered to be so important that according to Shain, if the homeland is ruled undemocratically, the group may be

¹¹⁸ Watanabe, 67.

¹¹⁹ King and Pomper, 80.

¹²⁰ Stephen D. Isaacs, *Jews and American Politics*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 119 quoted in Watanabe, 68.

¹²¹ Watanabe, 67.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 59-60.

expected to make a clean break with the home government and side with its democratic opposition. If the group chooses to cooperate with a nondemocratic regime, it risks undermining its reputation in the United States¹²³. It is even argued that to be successful, an ethnic group should be perceived “as a vehicle for exporting American ideals”¹²⁴.

On the other hand, failure to align an ethnic interest group’s own interests with American national interests and ideals can easily create a backlash whereby the general public might consider the ethnic group as a fifth column with divided loyalties that abuse their democratic rights. According to Tony Smith, various opinion polls shows that the American public is markedly against special interests and the popular opinion could very well be aroused if they knew “the nature and extent of ethnic group efforts to influence foreign policy”¹²⁵.

One way of avoiding such controversies is to formulate positions in terms of issues around which there is very little disagreement, or what is called “oppositionless issues”. Emphasizing humanitarian considerations, human rights issues, and seeking support for democratic governments are among such oppositionless issues¹²⁶. In fact, it is rather easier for ethnic interest groups to find such issues when compared to other interest groups because of the public inattention about foreign policy issues. Thanks to this public inattention, congressmen can be sure in many foreign policy issues that they won’t be penalized by the rest of the population for voting in line with an ethnic interest group’s demands. Asked about why he has supported a controversial legislation that was pushed by the pro-Israeli interest groups one U.S. senator said “There is no political advantage in not signing. If you do sign you don’t offend anyone. If you don’t you might offend some Jews in your state”¹²⁷.

¹²³ Yossi Shain, *Ethnic Diasporas and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 839.

¹²⁴ Martin Weil, "Can the Blacks Do for Africa What the Jews Did for Israel?" *Foreign Policy*, 15 (Summer 1974): 109, quoted in Shain, *Ethnic Diasporas and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 836.

¹²⁵ Smith, 134.

¹²⁶ Watanabe, 60.

¹²⁷ Mary A. Barberis, “The Arab-Israeli Battle on Capitol Hill”, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, 52(2) (Spring 1976):209.

Besides trying to create the perception that the group's interests are in line with the U.S. national interests, as they are understood by the general public, successful ethnic groups, like many other interest groups, also try to shape perceptions and frame options to constrain the policies that the key officials are willing to consider and by doing so to make supporting of their cases by the U.S. as the "smart political choice".¹²⁸

Having influence on think-tanks, which play an increasingly important role in shaping public debate and formulation of actual policies is an important way of constraining available policy options. According to Mearsheimer and Walt today American news media increasingly depend on experts from think tanks. Moreover, think tanks distribute easily digested policy memorandums to legislators and other government officials, organize seminars for officials and their staffs, and last but not the least supply advisers to presidential campaigns and officials to new administrations¹²⁹. In short, think-tanks have become a crucial part of the policymaking structure in Washington D.C.

One possible way of having think-tanks that share the same policy concerns with one's own ethnic group is to establish new think-tanks. As it was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, to this end Armenian-Americans have established The Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation, and Armenian National Institute. Likewise pro-Israeli groups have founded, among others, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and Saban Center for Middle East Policy¹³⁰. It is more important, however, to establish a presence in all of the important think-tanks because this gives the ability to influence foreign policy discussions through rather neutral institutions and this way a group's influence might become all-encompassing. It is argued, for instance that over the last twenty seven years pro-Israel individuals have established a commanding presence at such important think-tanks as the American Enterprise Institute, the Center for

¹²⁸ Mearsheimer and Walt, 151.

¹²⁹ Mearsheimer and Walt, 175.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 175-176.

Security Policy, the Foreign Policy Research Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the Hudson Institute, and the Institute of Foreign Policy Analysis¹³¹.

In order to shape the public opinion on foreign policy, it is also important for ethnic groups to be able to shape relevant foreign policy discussions at the universities. Just like in many other cases, pro-Israel efforts at the universities constitute a good example of how successful ethnic groups accomplish this task. To counter the increased criticisms against Israel after the collapse of the Oslo peace process and the beginning of the Second Intifada, pro-Israel groups have started new initiatives. For instance a group called the Caravan for Democracy started bringing speakers from Israel “to discuss the challenges Israel faces as the only democracy in the Middle East”, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) initiated advocacy trainings for university students who wanted to defend Israel at their schools and the Israel on Campus Coalition was formed to coordinate twenty-six different groups that tried to make Israel’s case on campus. Likewise, at times AIPAC has organized advocacy trainings for university students in Washington D.C. and it invites students to its annual policy conference¹³².

Another way of shaping discussions on campus is using methods of dissuasion. In 1984, for instance, AIPAC published *The AIPAC College Guide: Exposing the Anti-Israel Campaign on Campus*, which was a collection of the information provided by the university students that were recruited by AIPAC on professors and campus organizations that might be considered anti-Israel¹³³. Pro-Israel groups are also known to protest scholars who they consider to be against Israel. For example, former provost of Columbia University Jonathan Cole has stated that any public statement by the late professor Edward Said in support of the

¹³¹ Ibid., 176-177.

¹³² Jonathan S. Kessler and Jeff Schwaber, *The AIPAC College Guide: Exposing the Anti-Israel Campaign on Campus*, special ed. for the Hillel Foundation, (Washington, DC: AIPAC, 1984) quoted in Mearsheimer and Walt, 178-179.

¹³³ Mearsheimer and Walt, 178-179.

Palestinian people elicited hundreds of e-mails, letters, and journalistic accounts calling the university to denounce Said and either sanction or fire him¹³⁴.

3.7. Perception – Image Building

According to Paul Watanabe, the most decisive element in determining the receptivity of policymakers is the ability of an ethnic group to influence officials' perceptions of both the role of ethnic groups in the policymaking system and the substance of the group's communications. In other words, policymakers must see an ethnic group's case as sound, legitimate or politically relevant. In this sense, perceptions of the policymakers are very important because they tend to be lasting. Perceptions regarding current issues might very well shape responses to future events¹³⁵.

The public image of a group plays a crucial role in determining the degree of influence that might be enjoyed by an ethnic interest group in American domestic arena. If both voters and public officials believe that a group has historically been productive, patriotic, and reasonable, if its members are people of stature and goodwill, if its concerns are seen as part of the American tradition, then the articulated choices of that group can be received and considered sympathetically¹³⁶.

Since the image of a group is not static and may change from positive to negative and vice versa, it is important for ethnic groups to make good use of mass media to create a favorable image or to ensure the continuation or recreation of a well image. For instance according to Ahrari, task of pro-Arab groups is incredibly difficult because "...they not only have to overcome a pervasively negative image problem in America, but also have to find bases of affinity between a democratic

¹³⁴ Jonathan R. Cole, "The Patriot Act on Campus", *Boston Review*, 28/3-4 (Summer 2003): 16-18, quoted in *Ibid.*, 182.

¹³⁵ Watanabe, 49.

¹³⁶ John A. Straayer and Robert D. Wrinkle, *American Government: Policy, and Non-decisions* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1972), 36-37 quoted in Mohammed E. Ahrari, *Domestic Context of U.S. Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East*, 3.

America and a non-democratic Arab Middle East.”¹³⁷ The pro-Israeli groups, on the other hand, have no such problems. According to Mearsheimer and Walt, in comparison with media in other democracies, the American media’s coverage of Israel tends to be biased in favor of Israel. They argue that this is caused because of the pro-Israeli stance of a substantial number of American commentators who write about Israel¹³⁸. According to media critic Eric Alterman, the debate among Middle East pundits is dominated by people who cannot even imagine criticizing Israel. As of 2002 he lists fifty-six pro-Israel columnists and commentators as opposed to only five pundits that consistently criticize Israel or endorse Arab positions¹³⁹.

In order to assure the continuance of this pro-Israeli bias in media commentaries but more importantly to discourage unfavorable reporting on Israel, pro-Israel groups organize letter-writing campaigns, demonstrations and boycotts against media outlets that they consider anti-Israel. As a result, one CNN executive has said that he sometimes gets six thousand e-mails in one day complaining about a story being anti-Israel. Likewise, in the past many major American newspapers such as Washington Post, New York Times, and Los Angeles Times have been boycotted by pro-Israeli groups¹⁴⁰.

To monitor media and organize such protests, pro-Israeli groups have established various media watchdogs. Following the publication of Jimmy Carter’s book *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, for instance, one of the most energetic media watchdogs CAMERA has ran expensive full-page advertisements criticizing the book and giving the publisher’s phone number so that readers can call and protest. Such acts of protest eventually leads to some sort of self-censorship by journalists, editors or their bosses who are weary of the protests of the pro-Israel groups. As a former spokesman for the Israeli Consulate General in New York puts it,

¹³⁷ Ahrari, *Domestic Context of U.S. Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East*, 4.

¹³⁸ Mearsheimer and Walt, 169.

¹³⁹ Eric Alterman, “Intractable Foes, Warring Narratives,” *MSNBC.com*, 28.03.2002 quoted in *Ibid.*, 170.

¹⁴⁰ Mearsheimer and Walt, 172.

journalists, editors, and politicians think twice about criticizing Israel if they know they are going to get thousands of angry calls in a matter of hours¹⁴¹.

Other than involving in rather “reactionary” acts that are aimed at protesting already published media products, it is also important to involve in public relations projects aimed at winning the “hearts and minds” of the media representatives. For instance, in a project that has been described as one of the most “important, exciting, and effective” public relations initiatives by the head of one of the most important pro-Israeli American organizations “Conference of Presidents”, Malcolm Hoenlein, a pro-Israeli group called “America’s Voices” has invited American radio talk show hosts to see Israel and broadcast their programs live from Jerusalem¹⁴².

3.8. Partial Assimilation

The degree of assimilation experienced by the members of an ethnic group is considered to be important for the success of that group. It is generally argued in the literature that a group should be assimilated to the host country to the extent that its members actively take part in collective decision making processes but at the same time should keep its ethnic identity to the extent that it does not lose its emotional ties with the home country¹⁴³.

Smith argues, for instance, that assimilation of the Irish-Americans is far too complete for this community to have much influence in Washington. Italian-Americans and German-Americans are also considered to be “too assimilated” to have any influence on American foreign policy. Such groups as Mexican Americans, on the other hand, are far from having the degree of influence that they can have with respect to their size, due, among other things, to lack of assimilation¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 172-173.

¹⁴² Ibid., 174-175.

¹⁴³ Ahrari, Conclusions, 156; Smith 117.

¹⁴⁴ Smith 117.

CHAPTER IV

THE CASE FOR AND AGAINST ETHNIC GROUP INFLUENCE

ON AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Rather than outlining the views of all scholars who have expressed some opinion regarding the issue, this chapter will focus on the views of those scholars who have focused on the issue in an in-depth manner and who are considered to be representative of others studying the issue. In this sense, while the views of such scholars as Tony Smith and Yossi Shain, who are representative of different approaches that are adopted regarding the issue will be focused on in detail, others will be mentioned only briefly. It should be noted, however, that many scholars that undertake studies regarding the issue do not go into the normative debate of whether ethnic group influence is preferable for American foreign policy or not.

4.1. The Case for Ethnic Group Influence

Although a review of the literature on ethnic interest groups and American foreign policy suggests that nearly all scholars argue that ethnic group participation in the foreign policy making process is perfectly legitimate for a democracy, there aren't many scholars that come up with a comprehensive defense of ethnic group influence on American foreign policy by using arguments other than pluralism.

According to pluralists, "the public good emerges from the conflict of private interests" and in numerous societies pluralism functioned as a legitimate and recognized political force without being considered subversive. Moreover, they argue that pluralism is a part of the American life¹⁴⁵. Pluralists also argues that minority politics are not more divisive than other forms of political confrontation. Just like ethnic interest groups, other major interest groups (e.g. corporate, agrarian, labor) also lobby to sway foreign policy. In this sense voting on the basis

¹⁴⁵ Seymour M. Lipset, "The 'Jewish Lobby' and the National Interest," *New Leader* LXIV (November 16, 1981): 9. quoted in DeConde, 191.

of ethnic considerations, for instance, are not considered less legitimate than doing so for economic, regional or ideological reasons¹⁴⁶.

Others who defend ethnic group influence on American foreign policy usually suggest that ethnic groups can make positive contributions to the formulation of humane and rational policies, that they can attract the policymakers' attention to issues that would not be otherwise focused on such issues as human right violations and conflicts in their home countries. Moreover, it is suggested by Watanabe and Haney and Vanderbush that American government and Congress use ethnic groups as supporters for the foreign policies that they have already formed towards the home countries of these groups. For instance according to Haney and Vanderbush even the formation of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) was a joint initiative of the Reagan administration and the Cuban-American community¹⁴⁷. In this sense it is argued that at times ethnic group influence on American foreign policy is in fact directed by American policy makers.

The most elaborate defense of ethnic group influence, however, comes from the Israeli scholar Yossi Shain. According to Shain, the damaging impact of ethnic influences on U.S. foreign policy is overstated. Using such catch phrases as "exporters of American ideals" and "marketers of the American creed abroad" he argues that American ethnic interest groups serve the interests of the United States by promoting democracy and human rights in their home countries and by being America's "moral compass"¹⁴⁸.

According to Shain, during the Cold War, campaigns conducted by ethnic interest groups against authoritarian or communist home-governments that did not overlap with the U.S. Cold War design were either ignored or even obstructed by the U.S. government. With the end of the Cold War, however, there has been a greater emphasis in American foreign policy on America's mission of spreading democracy and human rights abroad. This led to the rise of a symbiotic

¹⁴⁶ DeConde, 191.

¹⁴⁷ Haney and Vanderbush, 356.

¹⁴⁸ Yossi Shain, "Multicultural Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy*, 100 (Fall 1995): 69-87.

relationship between the makers of the U.S. foreign policy and the roles assumed by the ethnic interest groups. In fact Shain argues that after the Cold War ethnic lobbies "...are "commissioned" by American decision makers to export and safeguard American values abroad and are expected to become the moral conscience of new democracies or newly established states in their homelands."¹⁴⁹ Consequently, today the more ethnic interest groups promote democracy abroad, the more likely that they can influence U.S. foreign policy¹⁵⁰.

For Shain ethnic groups may contribute significantly to democratization of their native countries. They might do this through a variety of ways such as by contesting the regime's international legitimacy, challenging the home regime's attempts to suppress or coopt its opposition, exposing human rights violations, obstructing friendly relations with the United States through effective lobbies, and finally by assisting and actively participating in the struggle of the domestic opposition¹⁵¹.

Shain considers ethnic group participation in U.S. foreign affairs also as an important vehicle through which sidelined ethnic groups may be involved in American society and politics. This involvement, in turn, makes it possible for them to be able to integrate into the American mainstream and makes their affinity with isolationists and extreme multiculturalists in their own community awkward¹⁵².

Finally, Shain argues that through the constant pressure that they exert on policymakers regarding issues of democratization and human rights in their home country, ethnic interest groups may assume the role of a moral compass for American foreign policy. This constant pressure makes it very difficult for U.S.

¹⁴⁹ Shain, *Multicultural Foreign Policy*, 87.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 71, 83.

¹⁵¹ Shain, *Ethnic Diasporas and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 830.

¹⁵² Shain, *Multicultural Foreign Policy*, 86.

policymakers to ignore oppressed groups abroad even when policies to fight oppression seem to hinder ad hoc strategic interests of the United States¹⁵³.

Although Shain's arguments make sense in terms of different cases of democratization where ethnic groups have encouraged American support to their home countries, it ignores other cases, however, whereby diasporic communities support policies that lead not to democracy and peace but to conflicts. Before the signing of the "Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between Republic of Armenia and Republic of Turkey", which aims at establishing "good neighborly relations and to develop bilateral cooperation in the political, economic, cultural and other fields" and "Protocol on Development of Relations Between Republic of Armenia and Republic of Turkey"¹⁵⁴, which contains such measures aimed at developing bilateral relations as opening up of the common border, conducting regular political consultations, cooperating in the fields of science and education, and last but not the least establishing of a history commission aimed at shedding light on the nature of the events that have taken place in 1915, for instance, Armenian groups in the United States, as well as in other countries with sizeable Armenian population, have started campaigns to prevent the signing of the protocols. Various groups in the United States unified under campaigns called "Stop the Protocols" and "Justice not Protocols."¹⁵⁵ More than 10.000 demonstrators rallied against Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan who has been on a tour to get the support of the Armenian diasporas for the protocol¹⁵⁶. Even after the signing of the protocol Armenian groups have continued their pressure to this time in order to prevent its ratification.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 84.

¹⁵⁴ "Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between Republic of Armenia and Republic of Turkey" and "Protocol on Development of Relations Between Republic of Armenia and Republic of Turkey" available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/t%C3%BCrkiye-ermenistan-ingilizce.pdf> (accessed on 09.01.2010).

¹⁵⁵ See: "Justice not Protocols" campaign web site: <http://justicenotprotocols.com> and "Stop the Protocols" campaign web site: <http://www.stoptheprotocos.com>

¹⁵⁶ "ANCA Sarkisyan'ı Topa Tuttu" (ANCA Has Bombarded Sargsyan), *Milliyet*, 06.10.2009; Deniz Zeyrek, "Diaspora Sarkisyan'ı Zorluyor" (The Diaspora Pressures Sargsyan), *Radikal*, 07.10.2009; Mehmet Ali Birand, "Armenian Diaspora Sins Again", *Hürriyet Daily News*, 08.10.2009.

As the Armenian case suggests there are instances whereby instead of contributing to peace and democracy, ethnic interest groups work against steps taken to achieve peace based on their own perceptions. This case also suggests that contrary to the arguments of certain scholars that ethnic groups are used by foreign governments to further their national interests, there are in fact cases whereby ethnic groups hold different views than their home governments.

4.2. The Case against Ethnic Interest Group Influence on American Foreign Policy

Those who argue against ethnic group influence on American foreign policy have certain common propositions regarding ethnic group influence on American foreign policy. One of the most important ones of these is the belief that there is an objective American national interest and that ethnic interests, like other special interests might, and in certain cases do, harm the national interest by inducing the United States to adopt policies that are not in line with it. According to George Kennan, for instance, it is natural that ethnic groups put pressure on government and Congress regarding issues related to their homelands. It is, remarkable, however, that in a variety of cases ethnic groups proved more powerful and effective on Congressional foreign policy decisions than "...highly competent persons of the Executive Branch who, in contrast to the lobbyists, had exclusively the national interest at heart."¹⁵⁷

Likewise John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt state that ethnic interest group influence on American foreign policy is the result of a legitimate form of democratic participation. They argue, however, that unchecked influence leads to foreign policy outcomes that are contrary to both American national interests and the national interests of the ethnic group's home country¹⁵⁸.

Moreover, some scholars express their suspicions that foreign governments might gain direct access into the American political system through the use of their ethnic kin in the United States. Although no scholar goes onto blame such ethnic

¹⁵⁷ George Kennan, *The Cloud of Danger: Current Realities of American Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977), 4ff quoted in Smith, 5.

¹⁵⁸ Mearsheimer and Walt.

groups with divided loyalties or being a fifth column, the implications of this argument are obvious¹⁵⁹.

In order to have an in depth knowledge of the case against ethnic group influence, it is necessary focus on the views of some of the most important scholars who have dealt with the issue.

4.2.1. Samuel Huntington and Erosion of American National Interests due to Ethnic Group Influence

According to Samuel Huntington, national interest derives from national identity and American identity has two main components. First one is the values and institutions of the original settlers who came from North Europe and the second component is the universal ideas and principles articulated in the founding documents of the United States such as liberty, equality, democracy, constitutionalism, limited government, and private enterprise.¹⁶⁰ In the final decades of the 20th century, however, both the Anglo-Protestant culture and the creed that it produced came under attack with the rise of group identities based on race, ethnicity, and gender over national identity and by the popularity of the doctrines of multiculturalism and diversity in general¹⁶¹.

With the end of the Cold War and downfall of communism as a tangible ideological opponent or as an “other”, this lack of a sure sense of national identity led to a failure of American people to define their national interests clearly. Consequently, ethnic interests and commercial interests started to dominate foreign policy:

America remains involved in the world, but its involvement is now directed at commercial and ethnic interests rather than national interests. Economic and ethnic particularism define the current American role in the world. The institutions and capabilities-political, military, economic, intelligence-created to serve a grand national purpose in the Cold War are now being

¹⁵⁹ Thomas Ambrosio, “Legitimate Influence or Parochial Capture?”, in *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Ed. Thomas Ambrosio (Westport, C.T.: Greenwood, 2002), 203-205.

¹⁶⁰ Samuel Huntington, “Erosion of American Interests”, *Foreign Affairs*, 76/5 (September/October 1997): 28-29.

¹⁶¹ Samuel Huntington, “The Hispanic Challenge”, *Foreign Policy*, 141 (March/April 2004): 32.

suborned and redirected to serve narrow subnational, transnational, and even nonnational purposes. Increasingly people are arguing that these are precisely the interests foreign policy should serve.¹⁶²

Huntington argues that rather than promoting the interests of their compatriots, ethnic groups promote the interests of their kin back at their country of origin. They provide their homelands with expertise and political leadership. They often pressure governments of their home countries to adopt more nationalistic and assertive policies towards their neighbors, sometimes at the expense of long-standing U.S. allies. They can even be a source of spies that gather information for their home countries. Moreover, and most importantly, diasporas can influence the policies of their host country to use its resources and influence in favor of their homelands. In this sense, “the institutions, resources, and influence generated to serve national interests in the Cold War are being redirected to serve these [particularistic] interests.”¹⁶³

According to Huntington, if the United States becomes truly multicultural, American identity and unity will depend only on a consensus on political ideology and without an underlying culture such values as liberty and equality are a fragile basis for national unity. If the consensus on liberal democracy breaks up “United States could join the Soviet Union on the ash heap of history”.¹⁶⁴

This doomsday scenario is not inevitable, however. The best solution to the problem of this ever-rising particularism is, according to Huntington, to have a new existential enemy, a new “other”: “... the United States, perhaps more than most countries, may need an opposing other to maintain its unity.”¹⁶⁵ Without such an “other”, for Huntington the best alternative is to adopt “... a policy of restraint and reconstitution aimed at limiting the diversion of American resources to the service of particularistic subnational, transnational, and nonnational interests.” This way when the time comes for assuming a more positive role in international affairs, when Americans are willing to pledge all what they have

¹⁶² Huntington, *Erosion of American Interests*, 37.

¹⁶³ Huntington, *Erosion of American Interests*, 38-40, 48.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

including their lives in favor of worthy national purposes, they won't have to redirect their resources from particularistic interests to national interests¹⁶⁶. In short, American power and resources should be reserved for the fight against an existential enemy, which according to Huntington, will unify Americans and assure the survival of the United States.

In essence Huntington directs one of the harshest criticisms against ethnic interest group influence on American foreign policy. For him they represent the particularistic forces that cause existential threats to the survival of the United States in its current form. Huntington's argument is problematic, however, especially with regards to the importance of assimilation of ethnic groups to the United States "culture and creed". Pro-Israeli groups, for example, are shown as the best organized and most powerful ethnic lobby of the United States by all observers. Yet Jewish-Americans who constitute the bulk of this interest group constitute one of the most well-educated, respected ethnic groups whose members are good democrats and capitalists. In terms of what Huntington considers to be the criterion for being good Americans in his infamous article "The Hispanic Challenge", Jewish-Americans dream in English¹⁶⁷. Otherwise how else could they be so successful in participating in American politics. In this sense it might be argued that Huntington's approach is self-defeating because only through adopting the American culture and creed that ethnic groups can be influential on American foreign policy. It is exactly because they are good Americans that effective ethnic interest groups are able to influence American foreign policy. Moreover, as we have seen in the second chapter, it is the American culture and creed that gives ethnic interest groups the opportunity to participate in politics and consequently influence, among other things, American foreign policy.

4.2.2. Tony Smith: Ethnic Group Influence and Contradictions of Pluralist Democracy

According to Tony Smith, ethnic groups play a larger role in the making of U.S. foreign policy than is widely considered. In principle he does not question the

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 49.

¹⁶⁷ Huntington, *The Hispanic Challenge*, 45.

right of ethnic groups to have positions on American foreign policy. On the contrary he believes that ethnic activism can be beneficial to American interests in the world largely by countering the trend in the United States towards isolationism and by promoting democratic governments compatible with U.S. interests. In this sense he approves, for instance, the initiatives that Washington has undertaken, which he believes to be largely at the behest of ethnic lobbies, in the peace process in Northern Ireland or the Middle East, in the expansion of the NATO in 1999, in the revelation of Swiss bank scandals, in the military occupation of Haiti, or in the expansion of trade embargoes with Cuba and Iran¹⁶⁸.

He argues, however, that at present, the negative consequences of ethnic involvement in U.S. foreign policy may well outweigh its undoubted benefits. Due, among other things, to ethnic group influence; American foreign policy has been generally incoherent and contradictory in the post-Cold War years. Such strong lobbies as Israeli, Greek and Armenian lobbies, whose voices are strongly influenced by the respective governments of their home countries, have “unwillingness...to concede that any voice but theirs should be authoritative with respect to the area of the world that concerns them”.¹⁶⁹

Against this rather particularistic stance, Smith argues that the idea that ethnic groups might determine American foreign policy with respect to issues that are considered important by them is unacceptable. Except in cases “...where their kinfolk are in clear and present danger through no fault of their own” ethnic communities have to think of themselves first and foremost as Americans and to ask what is good for the country as a whole. According to Smith this leads to a number of recommendations with respect to ethnic group activism in foreign policy issues¹⁷⁰.

First, ethnic groups have to use the power and the rights that they have under democratic government responsibly to work to reconcile ethnic and national identity and interests. Moreover, they need to amend their vocabulary. They

¹⁶⁸ Smith, 1, 77-78.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 161, 2, 78.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 164.

should not call the United States their host country, because it implies that their citizenship is transitory and that they have a willingness to use their American citizenship as agents of foreign governments or movements. Third, ethnic groups need to respond to fair criticisms of their demands by focusing on the merit of the charges and not by simple reactions such as considering their critics as racists. Finally, it should be acknowledged that the unexamined assumption that American ethnic groups are “goodwill ambassadors” that advance U.S. interests abroad through the spreading of American values may at times be a self-serving disguise used by Americans who are effectively agents of foreign powers¹⁷¹.

Throughout his study Smith constantly states that he is not against ethnic group influence on foreign policy and that although he is against multiculturalism, he is a pluralist. This rather in between position leads him to formulate commonsensical arguments that are aimed at taming ethnic influences on American foreign policy that are considered to be against the interests of general American public. Although certain parts of his approach are susceptible to criticism, the fact that rather than considering the issue as an isolated one, he bases it in the democratic theory is worth praising. Through placing the subject among such problems as how to balance the domination of the interests of the inattentive majority by the interests of organized minorities; the dichotomy of having “out of many one” or “out of one many”; the debate between multiculturalism and nationalism (or communitarianism) Smith shows that studying ethnic group influence on foreign policy is of importance not only to understand the formulation and the domestic sources of foreign policy but also to scrutinize certain assumptions and problems of democratic theory.

4.2.3. James Schlesinger: Ethnic Groups as the Source of Fragmentation and Hubris in American Foreign Policy

According to Schlesinger, America’s position as the world’s leader, its supremacy and its ability to lead are undermined by internal weaknesses that were well controlled during World War II and the Cold War. One of the most important of these weaknesses is the rise of interest group influence on American foreign

¹⁷¹ Smith, 65, 166.

policy. With the end of the Cold War, public concern about foreign policy has faded and this left the field open to domestic interest groups and especially to ethnic groups. This has resulted in an American foreign policy that rather than reflecting a common vision of the American national interest consists largely of the stapling together of the objectives of individual constituencies. In this sense, Schlesinger argues that “In terms of traditional standards it can scarcely be said that [America has] a foreign policy at all.”¹⁷²

In order to be effective and continue its supremacy, a world leader must have a foreign policy that is reasonably predictable and consistent. To have an effective and reasonably consistent foreign policy over a certain period of time, on the other hand, requires a national consensus. In this sense, rising influence of multiple domestic forces over foreign policy makes it impossible for the United States to have a coherent and consistent foreign policy and this makes it difficult for other countries to judge what America will do. This will make them reluctant to build coalitions with the United States to achieve their foreign policy goals. Moreover, they will start building coalitions to counter the United States and this will in time end America’s supremacy in international affairs¹⁷³.

Although a degree of coherency and consistency might be healthy for a country’s foreign policy, it should also be noted that flexibility is at times a valuable asset. In fact, rather than hampering consistency of American foreign policy, ethnic groups have been criticized for making American foreign policy towards their home countries overly static. This is the case, for instance, for the Cuban-Americans who have been considered to be the force behind the Helms-Burton Act, which angered many of America’s European allies, by penalizing foreign firms that do business with Cuba¹⁷⁴. Similarly American reluctance to criticize those policies of Israel that are widely recognized to be the most important barriers towards a peace settlement in the region, such as the establishment of new settlements, is considered to be caused by the high influence of pro-Israeli

¹⁷² James Schlesinger, “Fragmentation and Hubris,” *The National Interest*, 49 (Fall 1997): 3-4.

¹⁷³ Schlesinger, 6, 8-9.

¹⁷⁴ Haney and Vanderbush, 387.

groups¹⁷⁵. In this sense, it might be argued that more than leading to inconsistency in American foreign policy, ethnic group influence leads to making a less flexible American foreign policy in respective regions.

¹⁷⁵ Mearsheimer and Walt, 9.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Findings of this study suggest that ethnic group influence on American foreign policy is rooted in the pluralistic nature of American democracy and political culture, in the extensive role played by Congress in the making of foreign policy, in the American electoral system, and in certain characteristics of the American political system, such as the lack of disciplined political parties. Although the American political and social structure is favorable for ethnic interest group influence, this influence is only possible if the groups have strong political organizations that are able to organize and direct the activities of the whole group and different types of organizations that ethnic groups have, such as cultural, religious, and academic ones, towards a common aim; build alliances and counter enemies by using different methods of persuasion and dissuasion; establish an intelligence link with policymakers and their bureaucracies to provide/receive information and monitor policy making processes in order to be able get behind the legislation process rather than only reacting to the developments; use their power to influence the elections in order to have their allies elected and to prevent their enemies from getting elected; formulate their message in such a way that it is in line with the national interest that is perceived by the policy makers; create a favorable image of the group in the eyes of both those who are influential in the making of foreign policy, such as the administration, congressmen and their staff, academics, media, and the general public.

As for the normative question on the desirability of ethnic group influence on foreign policy, it can be argued that the classic pluralist conception of setting faction against faction that is suggested in Madison's *Federalist* 10 does not constitute a sufficient answer to the issue for the simple fact that factions do not have equal opportunities. A useful way to tame ethnic group influence in cases where this influence seems to harm the interests of the majority (or the national interest) might be to adopt John Stuart Mill's "harm principle". This famous

principle suggests that one's freedom can only be limited when it infringes upon the freedom of another person. As he famously put:

...the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection ... the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.¹⁷⁶ ... Acts of whatever kind, which, without justifiable cause, do harm to others, may be, and in the more important cases absolutely require to be, controlled by the unfavorable sentiments, and, when needful, by the active interference of mankind¹⁷⁷.

In this sense, an ethnic interest group's right to lobby can only be suspended if it infringes upon the interests of the majority of a country. It might be suggested that it is difficult to define the interests of the majority or the national interest, but in most of the cases one can arrive at a conclusion through the examination of the issues in case-by-case basis. Consider the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, For instance. Even a rough examination of the issue, tying of the implementation of an agreement designed to give the Soviet Union the Most Favored Nation Status to the Soviet Union's willingness to allow the emigration of Russian Jews to countries of their choice, suggests that it was against the interests of the majority of the American citizens.

Even if one agreed upon such a principle and diagnosed a case of infringement, how to prevent such acts from taking place without violating the basic democratic rights of individuals and groups is an important question. The most probable answer would be by creating an awareness regarding the issue in public opinion. This might not be an easy task especially in cases whereby the general public is not interested in foreign policy issues. But even having a principle to differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate ethnic group demands is important in itself for it provides all of those who are involved in foreign policy issues with a yardstick to be used in evaluating different cases.

The study of ethnic interest groups and their influence on American foreign policy is and will be important in the future for a variety of reasons. To begin with,

¹⁷⁶ John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, (New York: Longman Pearson, 2007), 70.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 111.

although the degree of supremacy it will have might certainly change over time, it seems that the United States will continue to be the most important actor in world politics in the years to come. In this sense, understanding the domestic sources of American foreign policy is a valuable endeavor in itself. Moreover, following DeConde, it can be argued that while ethnic interest groups may not become powerful driving forces of history in terms of their influence on American foreign policy, it seems certain that their influence will continue for years to come, because of the ethnic, cultural, religious and other connections that the United States have with many countries around the world,¹⁷⁸ provided that there is no fundamental change in the structural characteristics of American politics that have been outlined above.

In fact the issue has been attracting more and more attention from academia, foreign policy circles and the general public every day. This was the case, for instance, following the publishing of at first a controversial article and later a book, *The Israeli Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, by two prominent American political scientists, John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt. Despite this increased attention, however, the literature on ethnic groups and U.S. foreign policy is yet to become “mature”.

In order to have a better understanding of the issue, future research should be focused on comparative studies, among other things, so as to be able to test the degree of importance of different structural and organizational determinants of ethnic group influence that have been discussed in the second and third chapters of this study¹⁷⁹. Moreover, the review of the literature suggests that there is little or no reference to the diaspora literature. Using the knowledge and information created in that literature can in fact enrich our understanding of the relationship between ethnic interest groups and U.S. foreign policy to an important extent. In this sense, undertaking case studies that make use of diaspora literature seems to be a good venue to be used in future research.

¹⁷⁸ DeConde 199-200.

¹⁷⁹ The only comparative study that could be found in the literature is *Foreign Policy and Ethnic Interest Groups: American and Canadian Jews Lobby for Israel* by David Howard Goldberg. (Westport, CT : Greenwood Press, 1990)

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