Interest Groups, the Media, & the Public
Public and National Security Policy

Argument:

Among all policy areas, national security is the one facing the greatest danger of manipulation of public opinion.
National Security & the Public

- National Security Policy is remote
  - not experienced directly by the public except under extraordinary circumstances
    - Different from other policy areas: economy, environment, transportation, health
  - Public “knows” what it is told, not what it observes

- Secrecy obscures public view

- Media is the public window into national security policy
  - Matters more than in other policy areas
How closely does the public follow a policy issue?

Issue Attention Cycle

General Political Orientation
Of Politicians Elected

Rational Ignorance

- **Argument:** The more remote the issue from immediate public experience the more these factors influence public opinion.
“Onion Model” of Public Opinion

- Activists
- Attentive Public
- Mobilizable Public
- Disinterested Voters
- Non-participating Public
Mobilizing Public Opinion

- Special Interests
- President & other politicians
  - focusing latent opinion
- Events
- Media Coverage
Defense Industries

- **Defense Industry = Arsenal of Democracy**

- **Argument:** Defense industry warps national security by making the “means” of policy the determining factor of the “ends”
  - Organizational interests dominate interest group behavior
  - Eisenhower warns of *Military-Industrial Complex*
  - defense contracts by state
  - Top defense contractors
How Defense Industry Influences Policy

- Provides personnel to fill government positions
- Networks in agencies, services, Congress
  - Defense contractors, agencies, legislative staffs
  - Networks of convergent interests
    - Iron Triangles & Issue Networks
- Lobbying: Agenda setting & Option Analysis
  - Control issue framing and discussion
    - Information
  - Challenging alternative views
    - Assailing the credibility of opponents
    - E.g., Patriot Missile v. Prof. Postol
- Political contributions
- Employment
Non-Governmental Organizations (Think Tanks)

- NGOs
  - Focus on influencing government
    - Studies & reports
    - Personnel for political appointments
  - Focus on influencing public opinion
    - Media programs
- NGOs have a definite Political Orientation
  - To the Right
    - Heritage Foundation
  - In the Middle
    - Center for Defense Information
  - To the Left
    - Federation of American Scientists
Presidency

**Argument:** Administration can sculpt public opinion on national security

- **To support policy**
  - Focusing latent public concerns
  - Putting issues on the public agenda through the news
    - Trial balloons, leaks, and “background” information
  - Selective release of classified information

- **To divert attention from domestic/political problems:**
  - Creating national security problems
    - Nixon & 1973 Mideast War
    - Clinton & Kosovo
Media

Argument: Media is more importantly player in national security affairs than in any other policy arena

- Public directly experiences health, education, environmental policy
- National Security policy is remote
- Public only “knows” what it gets through the media
  - Media is plural
  - The WEB
Media is Susceptible to Manipulation

- Competition for inside sources
  - Trial balloons, leaks and “background” information
  - Disgruntled policy “losers”
Where does the Public get its News?

- 50% of Americans read a daily newspaper
  - 65% of Americans over 60 years of age
  - 25% of Americans under 40 years of age
- 38% of Americans watch nightly TV news
  - Average age of prime time TV viewers = 42
  - Average age of nightly news viewers = 57
Public Opinion

What Should Congress Authorize on Iraq?

Congress should not, at this time, give the President authority to use force against Iraq.

23%

Congress should give the President authority to use military force against Iraq if the UN Security Council votes to authorize such action.

43%

Congress should give the President authority to use military force in all ways he determines appropriate, including for the US to invade Iraq on its own.

33%

Importance of Multilateral Support

The US should only invade Iraq with UN approval and the support of its allies.

64%

Agree

Disagree 35%
Can Iraq Strike US with WMDs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does have capability</th>
<th>79%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does not have capability</td>
<td>19%</td>
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</table>

### Relative Priority of Iraq

Five foreign policy problems rank-ordered by priority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>% giving top priority</th>
<th>Median Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Osama bin Laden's terrorist group al-Qaeda</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The situation in Iraq</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>2.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Israeli-Palestinian conflict</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>The situation in Afghanistan</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The India-Pakistan conflict</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4.18</td>
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END
Total Defense Spending by State

$ billion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>0.2-1.0</th>
<th>1.0-2.3</th>
<th>2.3-3.9</th>
<th>3.9-6.4</th>
<th>6.4-12.2</th>
<th>12.2-23.1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
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DoD Payroll and Defense Contracts by State

Contracts ($ billions)

DoD Payroll ($ billions)
Hierarchical Classification Systems
- Confidential, Secret, Top secret, Code Word
- NoForn, Nocontract, or consultant

Parallel Classification Systems
- Ordinary classified information: defense data, state dept data
- Nuclear Weapons information: Q clearances
- Intelligence information
- Compartmented data – Code word
- Analysis, raw data (imagery & intercepts), source data