editorial writer will air both sides; they may have an axe to grind. But a colleague may well ventilate the other side. John Q. is usually aware of particular biases on the part of individual writers.

Finally, the public has a role to play in the making of American foreign policy. Ultimately, the American body politic must approve of the actions of its President, either by consensus or by vote. In our democratic society, support from the public is an essential element. The President's policy will not long be valid without that approbation. It is obviously difficult for individual citizens to affect foreign policy. We need first an informed electorate. Secondly, there are avenues by which individual views may be expressed. A citizen may write to the President or other officials of the Executive. It is my experience that reasoned letters are read, considered, and answered. John Q. also has the option of writing Congressional representatives, and write to the Congressperson who pays no attention to constituents! For a more public iteration of views, there is always "Letters to the Editor" in your local newspaper or in larger papers elsewhere. These sometimes serve to institute a public debate on policy and thereby have an educational value for the general public.

These, then, are the major actors in the making of American foreign policy. Obviously, the system depends on people, and people are not infallible. Officials will sometimes try to short-circuit the system, or they will attempt to cut someone out of the process. That is unfortunate and dangerous as well. We live in a time when we must ensure the sanctity of our procedures. We cannot allow our democratic system to be subverted, especially in the field of foreign policy. We have to put our best foot forward. All agencies involved in a particular issue must be allowed to contribute. The nation as a whole suffers if we eliminate legitimate voices within the establishment. While our system gives the President responsibility for handling foreign affairs, there are many actors, and sufficient checks and balances to ensure adequate ventilation of these issues if everyone is vigilant. The process is truly a team effort.

In summary, I repeat my initial observation: the President is charged with the responsibility for handling foreign affairs. The President decides what the foreign policy will be and uses advisors within the Administration to assist and to provide suggestions and options that are available. Then the President must 'sell' that foreign policy to the American public as well as to Congress. The Congress has definitive responsibilities in the making of American foreign policy. It must ensure that the Executive Branch stays within the rules and the law. Its oversight responsibilities must be carried out astutely. That is the basis of our democratic system. We need an informed public opinion, and the media can greatly improve John Q.'s knowledge and understanding of foreign policy initiatives. When the system works, we see the development of a national consensus and the formulation of goals based upon the national interest. If one or more of the main actors fail in their responsibilities, the Republic is in danger.

In closing, a brief comment on the continuity of American foreign policy. Policies based upon national interest seldom, if ever, change as a result of a change in the presidency, whether or not a change in party involved. These policies have been tried and are relatively constant. Sometimes an incoming President will seek a new departure. An obvious example is Nixon's opening to China when he assumed the presidency in 1969, but even that was not really a total reversal of policy because our policy toward China had been under review for years in the face of constant erosion at the United Nations. A new President will have certain areas of special concern and will seek to ensure that the bureaucracy will not go off on a tangent. The President will want to ascertain that day-to-day implementation is strictly in line with the new administration. An activist President will use the National Security Advisor to accomplish this and ensure that foreign initiatives are indeed those of the current administration. But that involves a very small portion of American foreign policy.

Whether a large proportion of the actions are delegated or not, the resultant policy is still in accordance with the basic proposition that the President decides. The mechanism for developing policy initiatives has evolved over the years, but the President remains responsible for the making of American foreign policy.

William A. Helseth
The Making of American Foreign Policy

There are many volumes dealing with how American foreign policy is made; some are very extensive with charts and graphs supporting the text, and others are of a more personal content, perhaps describing the author's direct involvement in the process. The purpose of this essay is to set forth in somewhat simplistic terms the procedures by which our national actions in the field of international relations are studied and developed. The discussion of the processes whereby American foreign policy is made is designed to clarify how our foreign policy determination is reached. We begin with the basic fact that the Constitution states that one branch of our government is responsible for the conduct of our relations with other nations. That is the President of the United States. The President has the foreign policy of the Administration's foreign policy. Only the President is accountable for American foreign policy. In that sense the President is irreplaceable.

Timately, in the democratic government such as ours, there are checks and balances. The Executive branch has primary responsibility for development of policy, but the other branches of government and society can improve before it can be said that we have a national consensus for the issues of foreign policy. Only then have we developed national goals and objectives in the international arena. To analyze how American foreign policy is made, we must start with an understanding of how the system has developed over the years.

The author is a retired Foreign Service Officer of the Department of State. His assignments included tours of duty with the Department of Defense and Central Intelligence Agency. He has taught at several colleges including the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He has lectured extensively on American foreign policy and developments in the Middle East and has taught in Oregon on many occasions under the auspices of the Great Decisions program of the Foreign Policy Association.

Extension Service, Oregon State University, Corvallis, O.S. Smith, Director. Prepared and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties.

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The President determines how our international actions will be developed. Over many decades and, in fact, for nearly our first century and a half as a nation, our Presidents were content to name the Secretary of State as the principal and only advisor in the field of foreign affairs. The Secretary of State, in those early years, had a small staff of assistants and clerks. Essentially that was the case well into the twentieth century. Of course, that staff grew with the years and in it we see the foundations for our present consular and diplomatic staffs. This system worked well because we were essentially a nation looking inward; we were intent on expanding across a continent. Basically, we were not interested in extending our presence nor our force over the seas. A modest presence sufficed.

As the American continent was settled, this policy began to change and by the end of the century we saw an immediate increase in the number of Foreign Service Officers. The Secretary of State was too small, too understaffed, and lacked the expertise and understanding that faced us, not just in political fields, but also in military, economic, and social affairs. The establishment had to be beefed up; governmental reorganization was necessary. Here, President Washington was the first objective: make and recognize a Department of State. The Neutrality Act of 1935 created this Department. Diplomatic Staffs were formed and a process made for an increase in the number of Foreign Service Officers. But there was no change in the departmental structure. The Department of State worked in Washington and in our foreign missions. At the same time that additional personnel were on board, the organizational directory was changed. A decision on those jobs and topics which were the immediate concern of the post-war years. (As an aside, there was only one Foreign Service in 1930 there was no department of State. There are now about 3,400 Foreign Service Officers.)

During and after World War II, the United States went on to become a global power. This put additional pressure on the President to play in the international arena, especially in planning for a secure and in the implementation of a national policy in that arena, which would be beneficial to nations and all people involved. At this time we turned our attention toward a foreign policy advisor to the President. (It is interesting to note the development of the National Security Team.)

That decision having been taken, it became immediately apparent that the foreign policy establishment was not capable of taking on the tremendous tasks that faced the country. The war years had seen a dramatic decrease in the size of the Department of State because the emphasis had understandably been on the military effort: the war had to be won before we would have a role to play in the peace effort. (This does not overlook the fact that President Roosevelt had doubled the size of the Department of State staff, in the early years of the war, to focus upon the peace to follow.) The Department of State was too small, too understaffed, and lacked the expertise necessary to conduct a foreign policy that would meet our needs. This was a decision that took place in 1930. It became apparent that some sort of coordinating system was necessary. The war years had seen the establishment of collective responsibility (within the scope of overall political realities) and what could realistically be expected in the military area from our allies. The Secretary of Defense was now part of the foreign policy team advising the President. The National Security Team was created in place of the three earlier Cabinet-level officials. The Secretary of Defense was entrusted with these new requirements in the development of our security system, and would advise the President how we could best utilize our military capabilities in collective security (within the scope of overall political realities) and what we could realistically expect in the military area from our allies. The Secretary of Defense was now part of the foreign policy team advising the President. At this juncture, we have the President exercising responsibility in the foreign policy area with two primary advisors: the traditional Secretary of State and the new Secretary of Defense. The reorganization of the government by President Truman in 1947 created a new Intelligence Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, under a director with National Security Council status. The CIA director had appropriate responsibilities in the international area for gathering information and helping advise the President -- a third major advisor along with the Secretaries of State and Defense.

While those were the three main advisors to the President in the field of foreign affairs, each in their own specific area of expertise, others in the Executive branch also had responsibilities in the development of our policies in the international field. For instance, the Secretary of Commerce had specific responsibilities in the field of foreign trade with other nations, and was expected to weigh in with the President on economic activity. Similarly, we were now assisting other nations with food and other agricultural products, and the Secretary of Agriculture must advise in these instances. From time to time, foreign policy issues would involve the areas of responsibility of other Cabinet officers and they would be expected to add their voices and their input before a final decision was made. Above all, implementation of these proposals would require money; therefore, the input of the Secretary of the Treasury was necessary. Treasury advice was needed regarding the financial terms of international agreements.

With the potential of all these advisors now participating in the determination of policies -- but not necessarily everyone in every consideration, it was soon apparent that some sort of coordinating system was necessary. Sometimes, the advice given the President was conflicting; and, on occasion, the Cabinet officials could not sort out their differences. True, the President was responsible for the ultimate decision, but the President needed to ensure that each office with legitimate input into the question at hand had had the opportunity to present its views and that the recommendations presented represented the best advice possible on the basis of all the information available.

President Truman took the first step to reconcile opposing views and to ensure all had a chance to present their opinions. This was an informal arrangement within the President's Cabinet. President Eisenhower enlarged upon this with a formal organization -- the National Security Council. It was a forum to consider policies as well as to review actions and to provide an opportunity for an informal exchange of views and information. The National Security Council embayment office did not have a senior separate director; it was a sub-cabinet level voice which was controlled by the dominant Cabinet officers, especially the Secretary of State. President Kennedy appointed a National Security Advisor with a small staff located in the White House to ride herd over his traditional foreign policy advisors. The National Security Advisor was not a member of the Cabinet, but the President expected the Advisor to keep in close touch with the various Departments. The President looked to the National Security Advisor for constant updating on the thinking of those departments, as well as for bird-doging issues in which the President was keenly interested. The National Security Advisor had no 'legal' authority over those involved in the implementation of the policies, but an official with the ear of the President, as well as direct access on an almost hourly basis, is a powerful actor in Washington.

President Johnson essentially continued the practices of his predecessor. It remained for President Nixon to make the most far-reaching changes in this area. He institutionalized the practice of a National Security Advisor in the White House. With the help of his National Security Advisor-to-be, Dr. Kissinger, the National Security Council was formally established, replace with inter-agency committees from the Secretary level down to the working level, the most important ones chaired by Kissinger or his assistants. In fact, the outline and directory of the NSC appeared on the decks of involved agencies on January 19, 1969, the day before the new President was sworn in. Of course, it was not then a legal document; its purpose was to let all concerned share in what the new terms of reference would
Department of Defense was created in place of the three earlier Cabinet-level officials. The Secretary of Defense was entrusted with these new requirements in the development of our security system, and would advise the President how we could best utilize our military capabilities in collective security (within the scope of overall political realities) and what we could realistically expect in the military area from our allies. The Secretary of Defense was new part of the foreign policy team advising the President.

At this juncture, we have the President exercising responsibility in the foreign policy area with two primary advisors: the traditional Secretary of State and the new Secretary of Defense. The reorganization of the government to carry out its new responsibilities was still incomplete. The war years had shown the advisability of an intelligence capability: the ability to gather information that could not be acquired in the more traditional manner of the Department of State. The war-time Office of Strategic Services (OSS) had proven itself; some such office was necessary in peace time. As act of Congress in 1947 created the Central Intelligence Agency, under a director with Cabinet-level status. The CIA director had appropriate responsibilities in the international area for gathering information and helping advise the President in third major advisor along with the Secretaries of State and Defense.

While these were the three primary advisors the President in the field of foreign affairs, each is in his own specific area of expertise, and the Eisenhower branch also had responsibility for the development of our policies in the international area. In the Secretaries of Commerce, Agriculture, and State, responsibilities in field of trade with Latin America and the Western Hemisphere. They do weigh in with the President with a much greater degree of activity. Similarly, these Secretaries were not only other members with food and agriculture, economic, and the Secretary of Agriculture, the President was advised in this field on time to time, for testing policy issues and involves the areas of responsibility of other major offices. This would be expected to aid the President as it moves before a final decision. The President's personal involvement on the desks of involved agencies on January 19, 1969, the day before the new President was sworn in. Of course, it was not then a legal document: its purpose was to let all concerned know in advance what the new terms of reference would be. One of the President's first official acts was to sign and publish this document establishing the National Security Council with its built-in mechanism to center the development of the President's foreign policy in the White House.

This mechanism remains in force today, although not every President has National Security Advisor has been as dominant as Nixon or Kissinger. They used the Council and its authority to center the final development of policy in the White House far more than their successors. Not every President has directed his National Security Advisor to "coordinate" policy as did Nixon. Nixon wanted to ensure that no action was taken of which he was not fully supportive. More importantly, he several initiatives in which he wanted to play extremely close to the vest: he had no "leaks."

New, let us turn to our central theme: the making of American foreign policy. How does the system work?

Decisions concerning foreign policy essentially begin in the Department of State. The President has delegated to the Secretary of State the responsibility for these functions. The Secretary of State, or the National Security Advisor, keeps the President informed of major initiatives and policy developments. To track the development of any action, we need to know how the Department is organized and how it interacts internally and externally with other departments.

The Secretary of State is at the top of a pyramid. Directly under him are the Deputy Secretary and the various Undersecretaries. Together they comprise the "Seventh Floor" or "the Principals," as they are colloquially called. (Their offices are all on the seventh floor of the building.)

The next layer of responsibility is that of the Assistant Secretary of State, who heads a bureau. A bureau is either geographic or functional. For instance, we have a Bureau of European Affairs and a Bureau for Consular Affairs. There are two to six Deputy Assistant Secretaries who are responsible for different offices within the bureau. Within each bureau there are Country Directors who have responsibility for diplomatic relations with one or more countries. The larger or more important countries have a separate director. Smaller, neighboring countries are handled under one director. In each Directorate there are other offices whose function may be political, economic, military, or in the case of multiple countries, affairs of one of the smaller countries.

The country Directorate is commonly referred to as "the working level."

These officers are all assigned to Washington, although their duties may call upon them to travel outside of Washington. The Department of State is represented overseas by Embassies, Consulates General, and Consulates. An Embassy is headed by an Ambassador, who is the senior American official in that country and is the personal representative of the President. The Ambassador and the Embassy receive instructions from the Secretary of State and report to the Secretary. There is a Deputy Chief of Mission who functions as the alter ego of the Ambassador. The larger Embassies will have separate sections for political, economic, consular, administrative, and informational functions. Some of these sections will be combined in a small Embassy. These sections are headed by a senior Foreign Service Officer: a Consul General, and a First Secretary in a small Embassy. Middle-grade and junior Foreign Service Officers are assigned to assist in the functions of the officer.

The above paragraphs outline the basic organization of the Department of State. To understand how these offices interact to advise the President and/or develop foreign policy, let us envisage a situation in which the President wishes to embark on a new initiative in the Arab-Israeli dispute. Depending on various factors, the President could tell the Secretary of State or the National Security Advisor to issue appropriate instructions. Let us assume the latter. The National Security Advisor would send a memorandum to the Secretary of State with copies to Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, and other cabinet-level advisors who would appear to have input for this particular issue. This Presidential memo would instruct the group to prepare a policy paper in consultation with the involved agencies for presentation to a stated date.

An inter-agency group, probably at the Assistant Secretary level, would meet. The principal action officers would be the Deputy Assistant Secretary in the departmental agency, and other cabinet-level advisors would appear to have input for this particular issue. This Presidential memo would instruct the group to prepare a policy paper in consultation with the involved agencies for presentation to a stated date. The action officers would oversee the work and consolidate the drafts as they were completed. A second session of the group, probably led by the Council Director rather than the Assistant Secretary, would complete a final draft, which would then be referred to the Assistant Secretary level for approval. At the Assistant Secretary level, officials meet to resolve differences. They might send the paper back for re-
Department of Defense was created in place of the three earlier Cabinet-level officials. The Secretary of Defense was entrusted with these new requirements in the development of our security system, and would advise the President how we could best utilize our military capabilities in collective security (within the scope of overall political realities) and what we could realistically expect in the military area from our allies. The Secretary of Defense was now part of the foreign policy team advising the President.

At this juncture, we have the President exercising responsibility in the foreign policy area with two primary advisors: the traditional Secretary of State and the new Secretary of Defense. The reorganization of the government's foreign responsibilities was still incomplete. The war years had shown the advisability of an intelligence capability; the ability to gather information that could not be acquired in the more traditional manner of the Department of State. The war-time Office of Strategic Services (OSS) had proven itself: some such office was necessary in peace time. An act of Congress in 1947 created the Central Intelligence Agency, under a director with Cabinet-level status. The CIA director had appropriate responsibilities in the international area for gathering information and helping advise the President — a third major advisor along with the Secretaries of State and Defense.

While these were the three main advisors to the President in the field of foreign affairs, each in their own specific area of expertise, others in the Executive branch also had responsibilities in the development of our policies in the international field. For instance, the Secretary of Commerce had specific responsibilities in the field of trade with other nations, and was expected to weigh in with the President on advice on economic activity. Similarly, we were now assisting other nations with food and other agricultural products, and the Secretary of Agriculture must advise in these instances. From time to time, foreign policy issues would involve the responsibilities of other Cabinet officials and they would be expected to add their voices and their input before a final decision was made. Above all, implementation of these proposals would require money; therefore, the input of the Secretary of the Treasury was necessary. Treasury advice was needed regarding the financial terms of international agreements.

With the potential of all these advisors now participating in the determination of policies — but not necessarily everyone in every consideration, it was soon apparent that some sort of coordinating system was necessary. Sometimes, the advice given the President was conflicting; and, on occasion, the Cabinet officials could not sort out their differences. True, the President was responsible for the ultimate decision, but the President needed to ensure that each office with legitimate input into the question at hand had had the opportunity to present its views and that the recommendations presented represented the best advice possible on the basis of all the information available.

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drafting. When they were satisfied, the draft would be sent forward to the President (on the seventh floor) for approval and submission to the President via the National Security Advisor. The final paper would have developed the new proposal, analyzed its effect upon the dispute and upon the countries involved, given the President's options, listed and evaluated the pros and cons of each option, noted any disagreements among the agencies, made assignments as necessary to implement the new initiative, and recommended a course of action for the President. The final paper would be presented to the President under cover of a memo from the National Security Advisor. If the President approved, the National Security Advisor would inform the agencies involved and provide the President's instructions for implementation. If he rejected the paper or portions of its recommendations, back to the drawing board?

A decision contemplated by the President did not involve other agencies, the instruction would have come directly to the Secretary of State, who would send the instruction to the appropriate Assistant Secretary with informational copies to interested " Principals " and other bureaus. The Country Director would be charged with responsibility to flesh out the proposal and to send the resulting paper back through channels to the Secretary. Most foreign policy actions move in this fashion and are in accordance with established policy. A President relies upon Advisors to carry out the general policies that have been established and that are directly involved in day-to-day actions. Advisors help the President if policy should be reviewed, modified, or replaced, especially in light of new developments in the foreign affairs, there are many actors, and sufficient checks and balances are in place to prevent a single person or group from unilaterally implementing foreign policy.

The Ambassador and staff are responsible for following any developments in the foreign country which impinge upon American interests. They carefully evaluate such actions on the basis of discussions at all levels, public and private. Usually an Ambassador keeps abreast of developments through the mechanism of a " Country Team, " which consists of all of each Embassy section and the heads of each agency staff assigned in that country (DOD, CIA, USA, Treasury, Agriculture, etc.). These briefings lead the Ambassador not only to his current, but also to his future, interests and to decisions of all possible consequences. The Ambassador's comments to his Department are usually written, but may be oral. The Ambassador or a member of the staff is usually available for Washington consultations, if a Washington-appointed official visits the Embassy, or if delivered through the telephone. The executive branch of United States government that does not provide a complete picture.

The President's policy for American foreign policy. The Executive is required to present its basic policy to Congress, to defend it, and to offer appropriate assurance. However, for every initiative or foreign state, Congress has the responsibility to ensure that the Executive is implementing the policy and that it is not deviating from established, approved policy. Congress is to ensure the Executive to appear before one or more of its committees to prove that they are within existing guidelines. Congress also has the power of the purse, since no foreign policy can be implemented without money. As we know, Congress is responsible for the expenditure of public funds. In addition, the Senate has the responsibility to give its " advice and consent " to foreign treaties and agreements negotiated by the Executive. The Senate must also approve the appointment of all Ambassadors. These requirements give the Congress a large voice in American foreign policy. Congress does not usually draft proposals, nor participate in day-to-day implementation, but its views will and must be heard.

The media has a role in the making of American foreign policy. That role now encompasses ensuring that both sides of a given initiative are carefully and fully set forth and evaluated. The public sometimes needs help in understanding an issue, and the press are relied upon to educate. Of course, not every columnist or editorial writer will air both sides; they may have an axe to grind. But a college may well ventilate the other side. John Q. is usually aware of particular biases on the part of individual writers.

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In summary, I repeat my initial observation: the President is charged with responsibility for handling foreign affairs. The President decides what the foreign policy will be and uses advisors within the Administration to assist and to provide suggestions and options that are available. Then the President must " sell " that foreign policy to the American public as well as to Congress. The Congress has definite responsibilities in the making of American foreign policy. It must ensure that the Executive Branch stays within the rules and the law. Its oversight responsibilities must be carried out assiduously. That is the basis of our democratic system. We need an informed public opinion, and an intelligent and responsible approach. John Q.'s knowledge and understanding of foreign policy issues. Where the system works, we see the development of a national consensus and the enunciation of goals based upon the national interest. If one or more of the main actors fail in their responsibilities, the Republic is in danger.

In closing, a brief comment on the continuity of American foreign policy. Policies based upon national interest seldom, if ever, change as a result of a change in the presidency, whether or not a change in party is involved. These policies have been tried and are relatively constant. Sometimes an incoming President will seek a new foreign policy, and we are left without question. This is unfortunate and dangerous as well. We live in a time when we must ensure the sanctity of our procedures. We cannot allow our democratic system to be subverted, especially in the field of foreign policy. We have to put our best foot forward. All agencies involved in a particular issue must be allowed to contribute. The nation as a whole must work to eliminate legitimate voices within the establishment. While our system gives the President the responsibility for handling foreign affairs, there are many actors, and sufficient checks and balances to ensure adequate ventilation of these issues if everyone is vigilant. The process is truly a team effort.

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William A. Helseth

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There are many volumes dealing with how American foreign policy is made; some are very extensive, with charts and graphs supporting the text, and others are of a more personal content, perhaps describing the author's direct involvement in the process. The purpose of this essay is to set forth in somewhat simplistic terms the procedures by which our national actions in the field of international relations are studied and developed. The discussion of the process whereby American foreign policy is made is designed to clarify how our foreign policy determinations are conceived.

We begin with the basic fact that the Constitution states that one person and one person alone is responsible for the conduct of our relations with other nations. That is the President of the United States. The President's foreign policy is the Administration's foreign policy. Only the President is responsible for American foreign policy. In that sense the President is accountable also.

Obviously, in a democratic government such as ours, there are other actors in the final development of policy. With our system of checks and balances, it is not possible for one branch to run rough-shod over the others. The Executive branch has primary responsibility for development of policy, but the other branches of government and society must approve before it can be said that we have a national consensus on the issues of foreign policy. Only then have we developed national goals and objectives in the international arena. To analyze how American foreign policy is made, we must start with an understanding of American foreign policy. It must ensure that the Executive Branch stays within the rules and the law. Its oversight responsibilities must be carried out assiduously. That is the basis of our democratic system. We need an informed public opinion, and the media can greatly improve John Q.'s knowledge and understanding of foreign policy initiatives. When the system works, we see the development of a national consensus and the execution of goals based upon the overall interest. If one or more of the main actors for some reason, responsibilities, the Republic is in danger.

In closing, a brief comment on the continuity of American foreign policy. Policies based upon interest selection, over, change as a result of change in the presidency or not a change in the administration. Those policies have been made, and are relatively consistent, sometimes an incoming President will seek a continuity in policy. An obvious example is Nixon's opening to China when he assumed the presidency in 1969, but even then he was not a total break of policy because our policy in China has been under review for years in the face of constant criticism at the United Nations. A new President will have areas of special concern and will seek to end the "bureaucracy" will not go off at a moment. The President will want to ascertain that day-to-day implementation is strictly in line with the new administration. An activist President will use the National Security Advisor to accomplish this and ensure that foreign initiatives are indeed those of the current administration. That involves a very small portion of American foreign policy. Whether a large proportion of the actions are contradicted or not, the resultant policy is still in accordance with the basic proposition that the President decides. The mechanism for making policy initiatives has evolved over the years, but the President remains responsible for the making of American foreign policy.

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**Extension Office**

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