

**Immigrants, Ethnic Lobbies and American Foreign Policy**

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*The United States is so obviously an immigrant nation that this fact is assumed to be significant for the conduct of its foreign policy. This article examines the assumption and whether the recent change in immigration patterns away from Europe and towards Asia as the point of origin may portend a significant shift in the orientation of U.S. foreign policy. This article also describes the effect that immigration groups and ethnic lobbies have had on U.S. foreign policy in the past, extrapolating generalizations from earlier experiences that may apply to the latest group of immigrants.*

The conduct of any state's foreign policy must be based upon some conception of national interest. The conception of national interest in turn, is derived from a composite of many factors: the state's economic links to others or the nature of the state's major strategic challenge. Because the United States is a nation of immigrants, this too is seen as contributing to a definition of the national interest which influences the conduct of foreign policy. That the immigrant legacy should be a compelling one for formulating American foreign policy is suggested by the sheer number of immigrants entering the U.S. For instance, from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth, two-thirds of the world's migrants chose America as their destination. Presently, about one out of every six Americans was either born overseas or had one parent that was born overseas. (Said, 1981,v)

Recent events in the Balkans and in the Commonwealth of Independent States, underscore the fragility of societies divided by ethnic cleavages. It is a testament to the resilience of American institutions, combined with the good fortune of geographic insularity that ethnic diversity has not had the same debilitating impact on social order that it has had on other societies. In part the strength of American diversity is due to the voluntary nature of immigration in contrast with the forced assimilation of minorities in multi-ethnic empires like the Ottoman and Russian. Nevertheless, there is one area of American life that should be peculiarly

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susceptible to any divisive impact that immigrant groups might entail, that is in the conduct of American diplomacy. For immigration and the resulting ethnic diversity might well circumscribe the nation's ability to confront the outside world as a unified entity.

Despite the fact that the U.S. is an immigrant nation, the precise impact of this fact on the nation's foreign policy is far from clear. At times, the extent that immigrants are present in the United States helped to determine some of the foreign policy controversies in which America became embroiled. One illustration of the tendency can be drawn from the early days of the Republic that--because it was founded wholly by immigrants--saw citizenship as a matter of choice. The European view contrasted with the American because it held that dynastic loyalty was inherited and hence citizenship was determined by birth. Consequently, for Europeans, citizenship could never genuinely be transferred to another political community through migration. The conflicting views over the criteria of citizenship provided the Founding Fathers with one of their earliest foreign policy problems because the British interpretation of citizenship led to the impressment of American seamen on the basis of the claim that anyone born in Britain remained a British subject forever.

Beyond this early example of the impact that immigration had on U.S. foreign policy, does the immigrant legacy circumscribe American foreign policy by making it more difficult for the U.S. to identify its national interest as Hans J. Morgenthau once suggested? (Morgenthau, 1952,974) Do immigrant groups tend inevitably to coalesce into pressure groups on behalf of a particular policy favorable to their country of origin? If so, might the current shift in immigration patterns away from Europe as the point of origin and towards Asia, pull the United States towards a redefinition of its identity as an Atlantic power in favor of a Pacific identity? For it has frequently been asserted that the Atlantic bias in American foreign policy is the direct result of shared ethnic and cultural bonds. And it is the cultural affinity with Europe that may erode under the impact of increased Asian immigration. (See Appendix A for a description of dramatic shifts in immigration.)

This paper aims to explore the relationship between immigration and foreign policy more closely. We will examine the manner that various immigrant groups affected U.S. foreign policy in the past, highlighting conditions that make immigrant groups likely to act as pressure groups on U.S. foreign policy and those conditions that limit the ability of groups to act in such a manner. Drawing from past experience, we will speculate on whether the latest wave of immigrants will coalesce to act as a lobby on behalf of a particular foreign policy. This paper is not intended as a definitive treatment of the subject, but rather aims merely to move beyond

some conventional wisdom regarding the relationship between immigration, ethnic lobbies and foreign policy. At the end of the paper, we will suggest some areas appropriate for future research.

Before discussing the impact that immigrants have on the formulation of foreign policy, it is important to underscore the fact that the very composition of U.S. immigration is not merely the result of happenstance. Domestic legislation shapes the ethnic and nationality contours of immigration. What is more, such legislation is frequently formulated with an eye towards satisfying broader foreign policy objectives. Several examples suffice to illustrate this point. Isolationist sentiment reinforced by America's participation in World War I, became a contributing factor in adoption of the restrictive quota law of 1921. One scholar notes of this isolationist influence on legislation that:

The isolationist reaction of the 1920s not only pressed home the danger of world entanglements in a more conscious and articulate manner than before, but also underscored for those sensitive to increased immigration the threat that national enclaves within would impede the fortress America concept. (Trefousse, 1980,201)

Foreign policy considerations during World War II similarly led the U.S. to abolish the Chinese exclusion laws that had been in effect since 1882. The abolition of restrictions on Chinese immigration in 1943 was intended as a gesture of solidarity to a wartime ally. In the immediate post war era, Cold War concerns expressed by the Internal Security Act of 1950 became the basis for an immigration policy that added membership in communist or totalitarian organizations to criteria considered relevant for determining eligibility to enter the United States. In other words, immigration policy itself has frequently been driven by foreign policy considerations and the resulting ethnic composition of the domestic population is the unintended consequence of the pursuit of other objectives.

The important immigration legislation for our purposes is the law passed in 1965 which contributed to the Asian influx because the law ended the active discrimination against such entrants that had permeated U.S. immigration law since the nineteenth century. As the INS bar chart included as Appendix A illustrates, the effect of the 1965 law on immigration patterns was quite dramatic. The latest census report shows that the Asian-American population more than doubled over the last decade and that one-third of this growth can be attributed to immigration. This increase in the Asian-American population may have the potential to

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translate into a domestic constituency that, along with other conditions<sup>1</sup>, could bias American foreign policy towards Asia.

The controversial issues concerning the immigrant legacy involves how important and systematic the efforts of such groups are in influencing foreign policy. Some scholars have argued that the immigration process could be considered "the single most important determinant of American foreign policy." (McC.Mathias, 1981,979) Still others (including Morgenthau) assert that ethnic divisions undermine the nation's ability to formulate a foreign policy that is consistent and based upon a broad conception of national interest. (Fauriol,1984,5-14) A regional variation of the impact that ethnicity had on the conduct of foreign policy was noted by Walter Lippmann who argued that "every European quarrel puts American nationality under severe strain," but that such was not a problem for the U.S. when dealing with Asia where it could confront that region with a secure sense of national unity. (Tucker,et al.,1990,6) Ostensibly, the historically small Asian-American community gave policy makers a freer hand in formulating U.S. policy in Asia than it had in Europe.

Perhaps we can best understand the current influence of ethnic lobbies on foreign policy and speculate on their future significance by drawing on the literature that describes how immigrant groups in the past have affected U.S. policy. Woodrow Wilson once observed concerning the legacy imposed on a nation of immigrants:

And the test for all of us--for all of us had our origins on the other side of the sea--is whether we will assist in enabling America to live her separate and independent life, retaining our ancient affections, indeed but determining everything that we do by the interests that exist on this side of the sea. (Halley, 1985, frontpiece)

It is perhaps appropriate that Wilson should have been so sensitive to these "ancient affections" since immigrant groups did influence the conduct of Wilson's diplomacy. For it was agitation by Polish immigrants in the United States that contributed to Wilson's decision to declare the Polish question an international issue that should not be decided by local powers bent on dividing Poland. (Christol and Ricard,1985)

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<sup>1</sup>Hispanic immigrants also showed a dramatic increase during the last decade. However, increased Hispanic immigration is less likely to have the same impact on American foreign policy because those "other conditions" are absent. Most notably, the economic significance of East Asia for the U.S. will tend to reinforce the significance of increased immigration from there. Two specific economic facts are relevant here: U.S. trade with Asia surpassed its trade with Europe for the first time in 1977 and the persistent bilateral U.S. trade deficit with Japan creates a high profile foreign policy problem for American policy makers.

Perhaps even more important for its impact on Wilson's diplomacy, was the formation by Irish and German Americans of the "Friends of Peace" that was one component of the isolationist lobby that delayed U.S. entry into the first world war. After World War I, ethnic politics--particularly the influence of the Irish-American lobby--is often cited as being a significant factor in preventing the United States from joining the League of Nations. The rationale for Irish-American opposition to the League was the fact that the nations at the Versailles Peace conference had refused to consider the question of the future of Ireland. (Halcy, 1985,162) In particular, the Irish-Americans were concerned that a U.S. acceptance of the League would preclude the U.S. from providing support to a potential Irish rebellion against British control because Article 10 of the Covenant pledged all signatories to respect each other's territorial integrity. Irish-American leaders believed this to be a defacto guarantee to preserve the British empire and thereby promote British control over Ireland. (Trefousse, 1980,34) Irish-American leaders made their views known at hearings conducted by the Senate foreign relations committee.

William E. Borah the renown isolationist senator from Idaho actively sought to use Irish-American leaders as part of a broader anti-League coalition. To that end, he supported their demand to be represented at the Versailles peace conference and submitted a resolution to the Senate intended to gain Irish-American participation at the conference. Although the resolution passed the senate, Wilson did not submit the request to the allies because of his concern for maintaining cordial Anglo-American relations. The high point for the influence of the Irish-Americans came during the treaty fight in the senate when a reservation was attached to the treaty reaffirming the principle of self-determination and calling for Irish admission to the League as soon as it achieved independence. All five Irish-American senators supported this particular reservation. Moreover, the Irish-American senators accounted for most of the democrats who joined the republicans in their opposition to the treaty. However, given the final League vote (55 to 39), the Irish-American stand and the defection of the Irish-American senators cannot be held as solely responsible for the treaty's rejection.<sup>2</sup> (Ambrosius, 1987,248 and 209)

Without a doubt, the ability of ethnic voting blocs to gain a hearing for their foreign policy views became more pronounced in the twentieth century. Politicians began appealing explicitly to ethnic voting blocs increasingly after the 1920 presidential election. Indeed, the Republican

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<sup>2</sup>The views of Henry Cabot Lodge, exemplified those of Wilson's opposition for whom the real issue of American membership in the League involved the question of presidential prerogatives to conduct foreign affairs. Consequently, many scholars argue that the League was doomed to defeat even without the Irish American agitation. See Ambrosius, 259.

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landslide of that year is often attributed to the role played by ethnic Americans in the election. Thus, American politicians through such appeals may be partially responsible for animating interest in foreign policy issues among ethnic constituents. By the 1940s such appeals had become an established practice of American party politics and numerous scholars have noted and described this trend.<sup>3</sup>

Ethnic politics played a role in the Republican Party's decision to include a liberation plank directed at the "captive" nations of Eastern Europe in their 1952 platform. It was however, a plank that the party had little or no intention of honoring with any active interventionist policy as subsequent events in Eastern Europe throughout the 1950s demonstrated. While true that these ethnic constituencies have frequently been courted for electoral purposes--they have not always benefited the party seeking their favor. For instance, the Republican Party attempted to garner the support of voters of Eastern European extraction in 1944 by claiming that FDR sold out Eastern Europe to the Russians. Stephen Garrett says of this effort:

Yet the Republican candidates did far worse in industrial districts with high ethnic concentration than they had in 1940. What happened was perceived quite clearly by senator Vandenberg in a letter to one of his constituents in Michigan: "I can fully understand that most of the Polish-Americans in our own Michigan area are also in the CIO and that these labor considerations were much too strong to be offset by any doubtful considerations on behalf of the old fatherland." (Garrett, 1986, 29)

Besides using ethnic appeals for electoral gains, leaders in the United States also used such constituencies as bargaining leverage when negotiating with other nations. (Garrett, 1986, 12-13) Using the presence of ethnic constituencies for diplomatic leverage confuses the issue of precisely how much influence such groups have on the formulation of U.S. foreign policy. Public pronouncements provide little clarification since the intended audience may be foreign or domestic.

Ethnic lobbying is frequently attributed with influencing the very direction of U.S. foreign policy. We have already noted some of the influence attributed to Irish and German Americans prior to and

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<sup>3</sup>For example, Stephen A. Garrett sees the 1944 election as exemplifying the ethnic trend in From Potsdam to Poland: American Policy Toward Eastern Europe (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986), 29; while Louis L. Gerson sees the 1948 election as similarly notable in "The Influence of Hyphenated Americans on U.S. Diplomacy," in Ethnicity and U.S. Foreign Policy, 26.

immediately after World War I. Interestingly, these two groups would prove much less effective in influencing American policy later. For instance, German-American activity before 1918 created sufficient animosity among the general population that the pro-Hitler Bund was not very successful in recruiting members. Evidence of the Bund's lack of appeal among German-Americans is the fact that it attracted only 25,000 members in contrast to the nearly two million members that joined the National German-American Alliance during World War I (Trefousse,1980,188) Once the United States finally entered the Second World War, even this minimal support for a pro-German policy "collapsed under the weight of the national interest." (Said,1981,236) Similarly, the Irish-American lobby has had very little influence over contemporary U.S. foreign policy toward Northern Ireland. Analysts assert that the decline in the effectiveness of the Irish-American lobby is due to the fact that there is no clear group consensus concerning the appropriate U.S. policy toward Northern Ireland. (Garrett,1986,50)

The experience of three other ethnic lobby groups that are commonly seen as exerting powerful influences over U.S. foreign policy should also be mentioned. The three groups are: the Jewish lobby on behalf of Israel, the East European lobby and the Greek lobby. The Jewish lobby on behalf of Israel is renowned for its reputation as an effective pressure group. In part, the lobby's effectiveness is attributed to the fact that there is a firm group consensus on its primary objective--the survival of Israel. However, it is not clear how U.S. policy in the Mideast might differ in the absence of such a lobby since the survival of Israel--to the extent that it contributes to stability in the region--would likely be of interest to the United States and an object of its foreign policy even without a domestic ethnic lobby.

An author of one recent study on the effectiveness of the Jewish lobby makes the point:

Ethnic interest groups acting alone usually have little chance of directly influencing public policy-making. They tend to be too small and lack the political resources required to independently influence government. Building coalitions with sympathetic government officials and other non-governmental organizations then becomes an important vehicle for broadening the power base of the group and increasing its potential influence over policy. (Goldberg, 1990,9-10)

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Building coalitions requires organizational structure which in the Jewish lobby is embodied in the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). The organization's annual budget exceeds three million dollars and it is headquartered in Washington, D.C. Congressional leaders respond to pressure by AIPAC because 92 percent of the Jewish community is known to vote regularly. A more important factor in the organization's success is that it is able to seize upon and use the strong sympathy toward Israel that pervades the general population.

Even given the pervasive public support for Israel, AIPAC has not always achieved particular objectives. For example, it was unable to halt the sale of F15s to Saudi Arabia in 1978 and the sale of AWACs to the Saudis in 1981. In both cases the ethnic lobby was unable to overcome other powerful interests. In 1978 defense contractors were a powerful lobby on behalf of the F15 sale, while in 1981 pro-Israeli sentiment in the U.S. began to weaken because of some intransigence on the part of the Israelis in peace negotiations. In addition, by 1981 the Saudi promise of moderation on energy issues and its potential to effect the energy and employment picture in the U.S. meant that some AIPAC goals were no longer consistent with the broader national interest.

Like the pro-Israeli lobby, the East European immigrants are in agreement concerning the survival of their respective countries of origin. Yet the effectiveness of the East European lobby is circumscribed by the fact that the goals they seek sometimes extend beyond the mere physical survival of their homelands. At a minimum (and prior to the dramatic events of 1989), the East European lobby has tried to prevent the United States from legitimating Soviet control in Eastern Europe and has tried to restrict U.S. interactions with communist governments in the region. The maximum goal sought by Americans of East European extraction, always was the liberation of their homelands from communist rule and Soviet hegemony. Because of the larger security concerns of the United States, it never seriously attempted to "roll back" communism and liberate Eastern Europe from Soviet domination. Since this latter goal has recently been achieved, it is too early to tell in what manner the lobby will seek to direct U.S. relations with Eastern Europe. One suspects however, that the post cold war environment will mean that Americans of East European extraction

are not likely to have a unified view of the appropriate American policy for the region.<sup>4</sup>

The limited success enjoyed by the East European lobby (not unlike the Israeli lobby) occurs when group interests converge with the broader national interest of the United States. Stephen Garrett argues the point:

Thus, in the period 1945-48, the United States made much of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe precisely because Soviet behavior there was viewed as a test case for their willingness to cooperate on a whole range of international matters. Eastern Europe in fact was adopted as a symbol of whether the wartime grand alliance could survive the war with Germany. (Said, 1981, 103)

Therefore, even though a hard-line U.S. policy toward Eastern Europe might have been applauded by immigrant groups, this did not demonstrate that the lobby was instrumental in formulation of that policy.

The Greek-American lobby is the last precedent case which like the others, illustrates the ambiguous influence that such groups have on the formulation of United States foreign policy. Within the United States there has been long-standing empathy for the Greeks and public opinion on their behalf was first roused in support of the uprising against the Turks in 1821. American support culminated in a Congressional resolution favoring Greek independence though any financial support for it came through private channels. Like the Jews and East Europeans, the Greek lobby today is perceived as a very influential determinant of U.S. foreign policy--at least on a narrow range of issues. The Greek-American lobby has contributed to the specific content of U.S. policy beyond asserting basic survival rights of a homeland state. The key event offered as evidence of the effectiveness of the Greek-American lobby is the embargo on the sale of military equipment to Turkey in 1974 as a response to the Greek-Turkish conflict over Cyprus. The tilt of American policy toward Greece is viewed as providing significant evidence of the strength of the Greek lobby on one specific policy because both Greece and Turkey are members of NATO and the broader national interest would seem to dictate that the United States maintain an even-handed approach towards each nation.

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<sup>4</sup>The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the USSR is mirrored by the fragmentation of American voters into national groups that correspond with the emerging political entities. Different ethnic identities in turn, are sensitive to particular foreign policy problems and have already complicated the campaign strategies for both presidential candidates in 1992. See Isobel Wilkerson, "Serb-Americans Feel Distant War," *The New York Times* (May 10, 1993), A12; and Thomas L. Friedman, "End of Cold War Opens Battle for Ethnic Voters," *The New York Times* (September 18, 1992), A20.

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The numerous studies of the Turkish arms embargo draw different conclusions concerning the role the ethnic lobby played in inspiring this policy response which makes it a useful case for highlighting the difficulty scholars have demonstrating a direct link between the actions of an immigrant lobby and foreign policy outcomes. Thus for example, Laurence Halley views the Greek-American lobby as responsible for the successful passage of the embargo act. (Halley, 1985) Clifford Hackett in contrast, suggest that while the Greek lobby may have been effective in the initial passage of the embargo, support for the measure began to wane over the course of the following year. For Hackett, this illustrates the fact that ethnic pressure groups have limited staying power and are less likely to be able to shape policy over the long run. (Said,1981,46-47) Finally, a third study by Goran Rystad suggests that the Greek-American lobby may have provided a catalyst to motivate other groups to work on behalf of the Turkish embargo. Thus he suggests that the effectiveness of the Greek lobby depended upon the post-Watergate atmosphere of Congressional assertiveness and the fact that the Turkish government had announced--contrary to the wishes of the U.S. government--that it would continue to grow poppies as an export crop. (Christol and Ricard,1985,89-107)

Whatever relative weights the reader chooses to assign to causes of the 1974 Turkish arms embargo, we must note that the act did establish a seven to ten ratio of American aid to Greece and Turkey that favored the Greek government. This ratio persisted until the 1986 fiscal year when the Reagan administration proposed a military aid package that would give 500 million dollars to Greece and 789 million dollars to Turkey. Ultimately, the Reagan aid package never passed congress and the Greek lobby is often cited as the important factor in maintaining the seven to ten ration in aid. (Madison,1985,961-964)

With the ethnic groups discussed so far, one way to categorize their lobbying efforts is according to whether the position they take concerning their respective homelands reflects positive or negative views of the government in power. Myron Weiner provided a useful summary and noted that groups with a positive view of the home government take positions on American foreign policy that aim to benefit the peace and security of the homeland state. Weiner places the Jewish and Greek lobbies in this category. In contrast, the East Europeans and the Cubans tend to be hostile to the communist governments in their respective homelands and take foreign policy positions intended to weaken or undermine control of the governments. A final group--illustrated by Irish-Americans, attempts to influence U.S. policy by making the United States partisan to battles in the homeland. (Tucker,et al.,1990,192) Despite the difference in attitudes toward the home government, it is not clear that groups adhering to any of

the three views are inherently more capable of influencing American diplomacy.

Where does the above discussion leave us concerning the impact that changing immigration might have on the formulation of U.S. foreign policy? Before immigrant groups can even coalesce into a lobby, several background conditions seem to facilitate organizational effectiveness. First, the size of the group or its regional concentration in key states should be sufficient to translate into electoral significance. For example, the Germans and Irish immigrants amounted to fifteen percent of the U.S. population in 1914 which helps to explain their impact on Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy. This contrasts to the size of the Asian-American population which in 1990 accounted for only two and one-half percent of the total population in the United States. (Tucker, et al., 1990, 186) Second, ethnic lobby groups need organization that can be aided by geographic concentration and the existence of newspapers in their own language. Polish-Americans provide the classic example in this regard. Polish voters are concentrated in urban areas and there are more Polish people living in Chicago than in Warsaw. In addition, there are more Polish radio stations and newspapers in the United States than in Poland. (Nathan and Oliver, 1989, 26) At the same time that the potential for bloc voting exists because of geographic concentration, there may be other limits on bloc voting because of a discrepancy between how leaders and the rank-and file view foreign policy issues. Thus, in the Polish case, leaders tended to oppose Nixon's policy of détente with the USSR while these views were not reflected by the manner the overall constituency voted in the 1972 presidential election. (Garrett, 1986, 13)

Another important factor facilitating immigrant political involvement will be the extent that the group becomes assimilated. The ease and extent of assimilation in turn, is partly the result of the context within which the immigrant chose to come to America in the first place. This point concerning the importance of assimilation to political participation can be illustrated with the case of German-Americans. In the eighteenth century, Germans settling in the U.S. were concentrated in regions that did not outlaw retention of their native language. Consequently, this group was able to maintain a stronger affection and affinity for its homeland. In contrast, German immigrants who arrived as refugees in the wake of the 1848 revolution were staunch republicans who were less concerned with maintaining their cultural identity as Germans. Political preferences as well as related efforts to direct American foreign policy differed accordingly for each wave of immigrants. (Trefousse, 1980, 122-136) Ultimately, the organizational effectiveness of any ethnic lobby will depend on its ability to

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focus on specific policies or issues that strike a responsive chord in other segments of the American electorate.

Differences in the conditions under which Asians have emigrated to the U.S. is even more dramatic and hence has led to a discrepancy in levels of assimilation and political participation between different time periods. One reason the United States found it so easy to implement immigration laws that discriminated against Asians during the nineteenth century was because of the circumstances under which those early Asian arrivals traveled to the United States. Unlike contemporary immigrants, the Chinese migrants that came to the United States a hundred years ago tended to be "sojourners" or single men who entered the U.S. to work and send money home with the intent of returning back to China themselves. In fact, a similar pattern prevailed with the early Japanese and Korean immigrants who entered Hawaii as agricultural workers. Given the orientation of such workers, it is no wonder that the Chinese did not organize politically in the nineteenth century to resist legislative efforts designed to prevent their naturalization as citizens. Furthermore, because the Chinese were disenfranchised, they had no electoral impact and hence local politicians tended not to be interested in serving this constituency. Because they were marginalized politically and geographically concentrated, the early China town communities remained quite isolated from mainstream American politics. Although geographic concentration is typical of all immigrant communities, what is unique about the Chinese experience is how long the pattern persisted. Indeed, the Chinese remained fairly passive politically even concerning the repeal of the Chinese exclusion laws and the key lobby group involved in repeal of the laws (the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion and Place Immigration on a Quota Basis) was composed largely of influential whites.

Present day Asian immigration is of fundamentally different character. Not only are the new immigrants more dispersed geographically, but the Asians who are now coming to the United States are coming with families and the intent to stay. Such immigrants will be more inclined than their nineteenth century counterparts to seek political power to defend their interests. In addition, political participation tends to be correlated with education and the new Asian immigrants also differ on this score from their counterparts in earlier eras. America's immigrants during the nineteenth century tended to be from a peasant background with little or no formal education and hence less inclined to political involvement. Today's Asian immigrants tend to be better educated than any of the immigrants entering the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been. One study, indicated that 37 percent of new Asian immigrants have had four or more years of college. (Glazer,1985,117) Education, like

geographic concentration will favor efforts to mobilize politically along ethnic lines and enable Asian-Americans to form a potentially effective lobby.

Though some of the background conditions do favor political mobilization of the new Asian immigrants, it remains uncertain whether this will translate into a coherent foreign policy agenda. One factor making the formulation of a cohesive lobby less likely is the existence of extensive national divisions within the Asian-American community. Indeed, national divisions are so significant that the editor of The Korean Times recently asserted that the very concept of "Asian American" is a myth. (Butterfield,1991,22) At a minimum, these national divisions (like those in the East European lobby) are likely to prove detrimental to group cohesion which would hamper the effectiveness of a foreign policy lobby. (Garrett,1986,41) (See Appendix B for the nationality breakdown of recent Asian immigration.) Without a consensus over a foreign policy agenda, there is less likelihood that Asian-Americans will significantly alter the direction of American foreign policy. Such would certainly be the lesson one should draw from the efforts of the Taiwan lobby which was not able to prevent the normalization of American relations with the People's Republic of China. The most that the Taiwan lobby was able to achieve was some commitment that the U.S. would safeguard its long-standing relations with the island (via continued sales of military goods) and establishment of an immigration quota for Taiwan that was separate from that of mainland China. It seems highly unlikely that U.S. policy in the Pacific will be guided by the domestic consideration of a concern for balancing the claims of the various Asian nationalities within the population.

As our previous discussion shows, ethnic groups frequently do focus on humanitarian concerns that often conflict with strategic considerations which lie at the heart of any nation's foreign policy. Consequently, such views can best be advanced when they are in keeping with grand historical principles like self-determination or isolationism. (Said,1981,28) Finally, the ultimate guarantee that an ethnic lobby will succeed is dependent on the extent that its interests coincide with broader national ones. Groups seeking survival for a homeland fall within this category because the United States almost always has an interest in stability and assuring against any sudden shifts in the balance of power that create a vacuum. Israel is the primary case in point, where widespread public acceptance for the right of Israel to exist is the reason that the ethnic lobby appears to enjoy such unqualified success. Also working on behalf of the pro-Israeli lobby is the fact that Arab-Americans only began to organize politically to counteract the influence of the former group in the 1980s. (Khoury,1987) In short, past experience seems to suggest that immigrant

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groups can influence foreign policy somewhat but they are unlikely to move U.S. policy much beyond what its interest would be in the absence of such a domestic constituency.

Extrapolating from these past experiences that ethnic groups have had in trying to influence the American foreign policy agenda, it is likely that Asian immigration will provide some bridge for making Asia seem less alien to the United States. To some extent this might serve to ameliorate the discomfort and estrangement that American policy makers have habitually felt towards the region. The most serious limitation on high profile lobbying by Asian-Americans will be the fear that such activity will generate a nativistic backlash comparable to that of the "Know Nothing" movement of the mid-nineteenth century which reacted to growing immigration by seeking to control and exclude "foreign elements" from political participation. Given past discrimination against the Asian community illustrated by the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, fears of a nativist backlash are not far-fetched and might lead Asian-Americans to place self-imposed limits on their lobbying activities.

If the history U.S. foreign policy illustrates anything, it is that the presence of immigrant ethnic groups in the U.S. electorate tends to cut two ways. Their presence makes leaders more aware of certain foreign policy issues and creates some pressure for action on them. But at the same time, given the fact that most immigrants did seek to leave their homelands behind means that they retain some degree of alienation from if not revulsion for their native land as well. One obvious case in point is the effect that English dominance in the U.S. population had on the early days of the republic. By the first census in 1790, three-fifths of the white population was calculated to be of English descent. In addition, two-fifths of the remaining population had originated in the British Isles so that continental Europe accounted for only one in seven people residing in the United States. (Daniels, 1990, 66) By itself, the ethnic composition of the U.S. population was insufficient to eliminate the hostility to Britain generated by independence nor to create an automatic pro-British foreign policy in the post independence period.

In the end these two effects may cancel each other out, leaving policy makers reasonably free to formulate policy according to other criteria of national interest. Thus, during the first century of the republic's existence, isolationism had a broad appeal for European immigrants who chose to renounce their heritage through immigration to the New World. The isolationist impulse was reinforced as immigration increased the ethnic diversity of the nation creating fears that domestic tranquillity might be fractured by any foreign involvement. Nevertheless, even in the face of this immigrant legacy and predilection, Truman was able to make a post war

commitment to Europe that can, in the context of the American tradition of foreign policy, be described as miraculous. Even though ethnic constituencies might be circumscribed in their capacity to set a concrete foreign policy agenda because of more compelling factors inherent in the national interest, political leaders can be expected to continue to pay lip service to the foreign policy aspirations of various immigrant groups--especially at election time. We should not be deceived into believing such appeals have any greater substance other than electioneering rhetoric. Nor should the U.S. fear that a changing pattern of immigration that portends greater ethnic diversity might Balkanize the nation in such a way as to undercut its ability to define its national interest or to pursue an authentically internationalist foreign policy.

Our review of the literature concerning the immigrant impact on American foreign policy has highlighted some inconsistencies in the scholarly work on the subject. Such inconsistencies reveal a need for more systematic research on the extent to which various ethnic and immigrant groups influence U.S. foreign policy. Since a growing share of the recent immigrants originates in Asia, it seems especially appropriate to try to assess their impact on American diplomacy. A good starting point for more systematic research would be to identify the level of political participation for each of the national groups of immigrants. Two categories of projects would enable this identification: voting behavior studies and surveys of attitudes. The key for conducting a study of voting patterns within the national groups of the Asian community lies with determining the rate at which each national group tends to become naturalized citizens. From this basis scholars might then study the rate of voter registration and extent of voting by the national groups. Further, examination of local elections in states where Asian immigrants have settled, might yield interesting insights into the kind of issues that are most likely to politicize Asian-Americans as well as illustrate the extent to which the Asian community fields candidates for elective office.

The second component of research requires systematic effort to interview and survey Asian-Americans for their views on American foreign policy. Is there a difference in outlook by national group concerning general principles for U.S. diplomacy? Do particular national groups differ on the whole range of concrete issues between the United States and Asian countries? Respondents should be queried on their views of such important issues as the U.S.-Japan trade dispute, the normalization of relations with Vietnam and the appropriate response to North Korean nuclear activity. Besides comparing attitudes of various national groups, scholars should compare views of those immigrants that assimilate more quickly with those who are slower to do so. (Perhaps measuring assimilation by the use and

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retention of native languages.) In addition, scholars could try to ascertain whether foreign policy views vary between people entering as immigrants and those entering the country as refugees or asylees. An interesting question to answer would be whether the latter group of entrants are indeed more hostile to their country of origin and whether this hostility is reflected in their view of the appropriate American policy towards their homeland. A study of opinions can build upon the categories described by Myron Weiner to see if they are applicable to Asian-Americans and whether any of the categories is more inclined to political activism.

In the past few years there has been much expansive rhetoric in public discussions of economic trends in East Asia. The phenomenal economic success of Japan is often portrayed as indicative of a shift in the entire global economy away from the Atlantic and towards the Pacific. If there is any truth to such assertions, a systematic study of Asian-Americans as an ethnic lobby--especially its potential to affect diplomacy--seems essential and timely.

## **APPENDIX A**

The period of 1851 to 1950 saw the height of the European immigration to the U.S. while relatively few Asians entered the U.S. during that period. Asian immigration began to increase perceptibly in 1961 and continues to grow. According to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Asian immigration more than doubled from 1960 to 1970 and more than doubled again in the next decade. In contrast, European immigration remained fairly constant from 1960 to 1970 and declined steadily over the next decade. See the bar chart in U.S. Department of Justice, 1986 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, xiv.

## APPENDIX B

The nationality breakdown for Asian immigration shown in this table was compiled from: Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (1966-1981) Washington, D.C. and The Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (1981-1988) Washington, D.C. A couple of points concerning the data should be noted. First we confined the table to countries of East Asia and did not include totals listed in "other" category because the INS defines Asia so broadly that it includes countries like Turkey and Iran in the Asian group. Second, INS changed its reporting practice and combined figures for nationalist China and the People's Republic of China until 1982 when immigration from Taiwan was reported separately. Similarly, the INS has varied its reporting of other countries, sometimes changing them from "other" to listing totals separately. The dates in brackets in the third column reflect such changes in INS reporting practice.

Country of Origin	Years	
	1956-1965	1966-1988
Burma	not available	14,663 [1973-1988]
China	43,445	479,712
Hong Kong	5,965	112,132
Indonesia	18,425	23,813
Japan	48,931	91,288
Kampuchea	not available	99,789 [1977-1988]
Korea	16,361	560,298
Laos	not available	144,885 [1977-1988]
Malaysia	1,300	10,351 [1977-1988]
Philippines	1,872	799,287
Singapore	not available	4,709 [1977-1988]
Thailand	not available	92,794 [1968-1988]
Vietnam	not available	496,569
Taiwan	included in China	88,980 [1982-1988]

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