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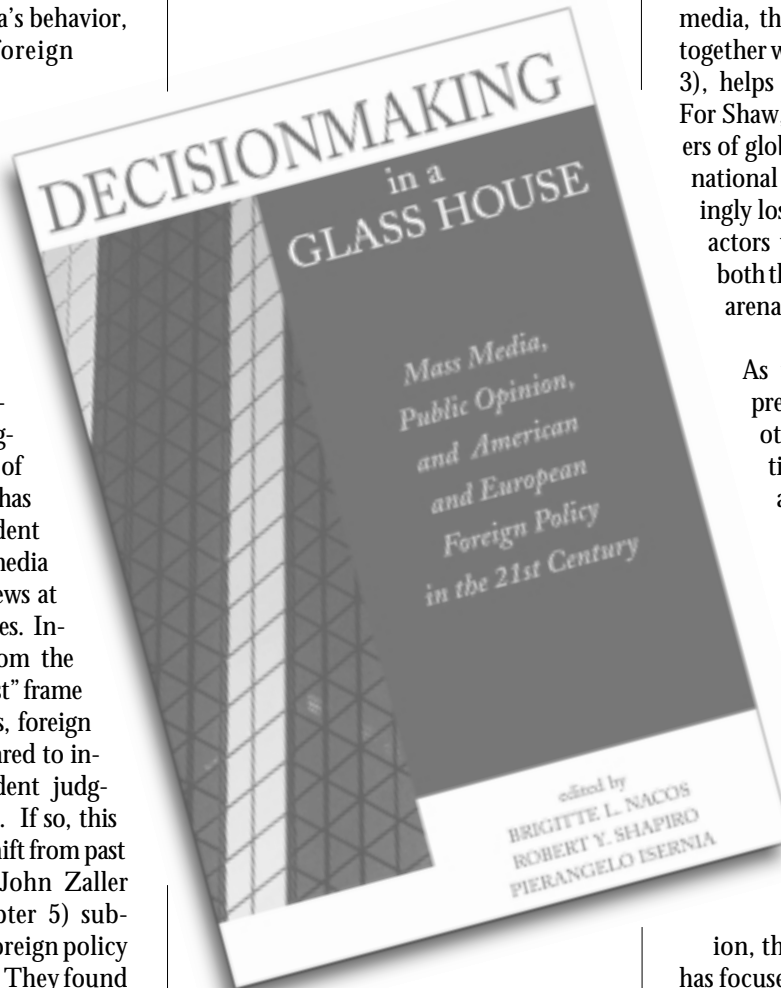
An excerpt from *DECISIONMAKING IN A GLASS HOUSE*.

Edited by Brigitte L. Nacos, Robert Y. Shapiro and Pierangelo Isernia

In light of the new geopolitical realities and problems on the one hand and ongoing transformations in international communications on the other, this volume explores the degree to which these changes have affected, and perhaps altered, the media's behavior, public opinion, and foreign policymaking in the United States and Europe....

The dominance of government news beats and "official sources" in foreign policy coverage during the Cold War has been well documented. Robert Entman's provocative analysis (Chapter 2) suggests that the breakdown of the Cold War consensus has heightened the independent capacity of the American media to frame foreign policy news at the expense of political elites. Instead of taking a lead from the Cold War "national interest" frame expressed by policymakers, foreign affairs reporting has appeared to increasingly offer independent judgments and interpretations. If so, this would be a fundamental shift from past reporting patterns that John Zaller and Dennis Chiu (Chapter 5) substantiate with respect to foreign policy crises from 1945 to 1991. They found that the media took a cue from congressional leaders (and presumably other governmental leaders) and "indexed" their coverage to reflect and magnify the range of views expressed within government in the face of military conflicts or the threat of war. But while these authors did not find such "indexing" characteristics when they examined media reporting on foreign policy crises after the end of the Cold War, there is also evidence that the old "indexing" patterns are alive and well in the post-Cold War news coverage of foreign crises.

According to Entman, however, the end of the Cold War consensus deprived American leaders of the compelling story line about the "evil empire" that also satisfied the



media's appetite for drama and conflict. As a result, the contemporary mass media seek out dramatic, tragic, and conflict-filled stories that they can report through striking visuals, such as those of starving children in Somalia or captured GIs in Belgrade....

Entman's hypothesis that the emerging autonomy of the post-Cold War media has diminished the influence of government leaders over foreign policy news—and thus over public opinion—differs from Robert Shapiro and Larry

Jacobs's conclusion (Chapter 14) that the complexities of the new world order have in fact enhanced presidents' opportunities to lead—and manipulate—public opinion. However, Martin Shaw's innovative theory about the media, the public, and governments, together with his case studies (Chapter 3), helps to bridge this discrepancy. For Shaw, the mass media are providers of global public spaces over which national governments have increasingly lost control, as well as political actors with interests and biases in both the domestic and international arenas....

As the new century arrived..., presidents, prime ministers, and other high officials have continued to receive ample media access and opportunities to lead public opinion—if only because of the press's tendency to cover official sources prominently and the fierce competition among the growing number of profit-seeking media outlets....

During the Cold War and even thereafter, most research on public opinion, the media, and foreign policy has focused overwhelmingly on crises involving military actions, the threat of war, and important security and defense issues. But after the Cold War, conflicts have arisen just as often—if not more so—in areas such as trade, the environment, and the economic and political gap between rich and poor countries. In comparing American and German coverage of the global-warming issue, Brigitte Nacos, Robert Shapiro, Natasha Hritzuk, and Bruce Chadwick (Chapter 4) synthesize the approaches taken by Entman, Zaller/Chiu, and Shaw. Their expectation, however—that the

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global public sphere created by the media should have resulted in similar patterns of news reporting in comparable industrialized democracies such as the United States and Germany—was not borne out....

...[The] question of whether foreign policymakers correctly perceive the parameters of public opinion is central to Steven Kull and Clay Ramsay's research (Chapter 7). By comparing the views and perceptions of eighty-three members of the US foreign policy establishment with systematic polling data, Kull and Ramsay found significant discrepancies on a host of important foreign policy issues. Natalie La Balme (Chapter 16) and Pierangelo Isernia (Chapter 17) describe how French and Italian decisionmakers also depend heavily on what amounts to "perceived opinion," relying on the mass media and information sources other than more direct measures of public opinion.

In the new order—or disorder—of the post-Cold War world, in which there may not be clear-cut national interests and foreign policy doctrines, policymakers may be especially tempted to follow such perceptions of public opinion that may not be based on the most valid and reliable sources. Fearing the consequences of military engagements, especially according to the "body-bag thesis," decisionmakers may indeed act—out of uncertainty and caution—on misperceptions of public opinion. Philip Everts (Chapter 11) sees this happening in peacekeeping and other humanitarian missions, as well as in cases of responses to aggression or other conflict. Utilizing extensive survey data, Richard Sobel (Chapter 8) examines public attitudes in the United States and Western Europe toward intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s. Contrasting the relatively strong public backing of multinational intervention in the

United States and Europe with the weak US and European responses, Sobel explores the reasons for this discrepancy between public support for intervention in the Balkans and governments' reluctance to intervene militarily. Isernia presents data from Italy that confirm this gap between the public's interventionist attitudes and decisionmakers' greater reluctance.

These discrepancies in recent cases do not square with the American elites' generally stronger and the American public's weaker support for a prominent US role in international affairs. Looking at this gap between public and elite attitudes, Eugene Wittkopf and Ronald Hinckley (Chapter 9) examine whether domestic factors generally affect the public's foreign policy attitudes more than elite opinion.

While differences between public and elite opinions exist, the notion that the end of the Cold War has fundamentally altered public attitudes toward international affairs, peace, and security, especially specific foreign and defense policies in the United States and Western Europe, is contradicted by Richard Eichenberg (Chapter 10) and Philip Everts (Chapter 11). While tracing some changes in the 1990s, they found more stability than change in Western Europeans' support for a common European security policy and NATO and, in the case of the Netherlands, for the necessity of armed forces. Richard Sinnott (Chapter 15) traced growing support for centralized European decisionmaking in matters of defense in some European countries, and he found shifts in favor of national defense policies in others. Moreover, his data reveal that public support for European integration had declined since late 1991.

Eric Shiraev and Vlad Zubok (Chapter 12) provide a groundbreaking analysis of post-Cold War Russia. They are

especially concerned with events that involved the United States and Western Europe on one side and Russia on the other: the expansion of NATO and the Balkan conflicts in the last years of the twentieth century. The authors describe how the bombing of Serbia by NATO forces in 1999 at the height of the Kosovo conflict markedly strengthened anti-Western sentiments in Russia....

In the very different political systems found throughout Western Europe, the relationships between and among the media, public opinion, and government policies are less transparent than in the United States. In a party state like Italy, as Isernia reminds us, the media provide less of a link between the government and the people than a means of communication among party leaders and political elites. Thus, in the case of the Bosnian crisis, Italian decisionmakers reacted "to the events in Bosnia as perceived on the basis of media coverage rather than public opinion." Similarly, based on extensive interviews with foreign policy officials in France, La Balme concludes that the impact of public opinion on French foreign policy has been limited and has depended mostly on decisionmakers' inclinations to follow or not follow public preferences. Even when massive media coverage of events or developments heightens decisionmakers' attentiveness to public opinion, they tend to base their perceptions of public opinion on sources other than the results of opinion surveys.

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