

Carter and Scott address an important discrepancy between practitioner accounts and mainstream academic studies of the US foreign policy-making process. Academic scholars generally emphasise the pre-eminence of the president in foreign policy. However, practitioners, including several presidents, describe an institutional environment that comprises multiple centres of power, and highlight especially the impact of individual members of Congress. For Carter and Scott this discrepancy results from a restricted view, in academic studies, of the foreign policy-making process. Scholars tend to use methods – statistical analyses and historical examinations of major events in foreign policy – that overlook the subtle, regular, and highly consequential ways that members can influence foreign policy. Carter and Scott probe this understudied dimension of foreign policy-making. They assert (p. 26) that ‘congressional foreign policy entrepreneurs are members of Congress who take the initiative on the foreign policy issues about which they care rather than await action from the administration.’ These members use a variety of legislative and non-legislative tools to pursue their foreign policy goals. Congress’s legislative powers – derived from the Constitution – are well known: laws, appropriations, treaties (Senate), and appointments (Senate). But it is easy – and common – to overlook the important non-legislative tools that members use: consultations with administration officials, framing debates in the media, oversight activities, and foreign contacts. By using these legislative and non-legislative mechanisms in carefully ordered sequences, congressional foreign policy entrepreneurs are able to exert pressure on the president and executive officials; transform the context in which existing foreign policy issues are debated; and even create new issue agendas.

Carter and Scott use evidence from a quantitative dataset (consisting of observable episodes of entrepreneurial activity between 1946 and 2000) and a number of detailed case studies to show that congressional foreign policy entrepreneurs have frequently challenged presidential leadership in foreign policy. However, members’ activism (attempts to influence policy) and assertiveness (attempts to challenge the executive) have varied depending on the degree of consensus on grand strategy and particular tactics. Thus, while Cold War consensus led Congress to co-operate with the president in the immediate post-war decades, Congress readily and forcefully challenged the executive during the 1970s because of divisions over the Vietnam War.

This study is a valuable contribution to the literature on American foreign policy-making. This is partly because of its theoretical arguments: its thesis implies that political scientists should reconsider some of their accepted truths about US foreign policy-making. But without substantial empirical support this thesis is merely an interesting hypothesis. However, Carter and Scott present empirical evidence that makes their theoretical claims appear well grounded and generally convincing. Their quantitative dataset is impressively extensive and combines smoothly with their carefully organised case studies of leading congressional foreign policy entrepreneurs (including Frank Church, William Fulbright, Jesse Helms, and Jacob Javits). One limitation of this book is its treatment of foreign policy successes. While Carter and Scott are consistently rigorous in their conceptualisation of the tools that are used by congressional

foreign policy entrepreneurs, their discussion of the effects of the members' actions is not theorised as carefully. The reader is left unclear as to when the different methods of entrepreneurial activity are likely to be deployed successfully and how these actions fit within broader theories of executive-legislative interactions. Another issue that the book does not consider adequately is the motivations of congressional policy entrepreneurs. Carter and Scott propose (p. 45) that 'entrepreneurship is most common on economic-developmental issues' because members of Congress are primarily concerned with their re-election and this leads them to concentrate their efforts on matters that might impact directly upon their constituents. Instead Carter and Scott find that their evidence contradicts this expectation. But they do not address the questions that result from this finding: Why are congressional foreign policy entrepreneurs driven to act on military-security and political-diplomatic issues even though these seldom affect the welfare of their constituents as much as economic-development issues? And in what ways should we construct models of members' behavioural goals to capture these complex motivations? However, despite these questions that the Carter and Scott study provokes but does not really answer, the book is clearly a thorough study of an important set of problems.