



Selling Intervention and War: The Presidency, the Media, and the American Public

By Jon Western



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Selling Intervention and War examines the competition among foreign policy elites in the executive branch and Congress in winning the hearts and minds of the American public for military intervention. The book studies how the president and his supporters organize campaigns for public support for military action. According to Jon Western, the outcome depends upon information and propaganda advantages, media support or opposition, the degree of cohesion within the executive branch, and the duration of the crisis. Also important is whether the American public believes that military threat is credible and victory plausible. Not all such campaigns to win public support are successful; in some instances, foreign policy elites and the president and his advisors have to back off.

Western uses several modern conflicts, including the current one in Iraq, as case studies to illustrate the methods involved in selling intervention and war to the American public: the decision not to intervene in French Indochina in 1954, the choice to go into Lebanon in 1958, and the more recent military actions in Grenada, Somalia, Bosnia, and Iraq.

Selling Intervention and War is essential reading for scholars and students of U.S. foreign policy, international security, the military and foreign policy, and international conflict.

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Editorial Review

Review

"An excellent contribution to our understanding of how different groups in American government and society?with different beliefs about the proper use of force?try to sell their position on either promoting intervention or preventing it. It is a natural for courses on American foreign policy or for students studying the role of the media in foreign policy."

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"Historians and political scientists will find value in this book."

(*Choice*)

"In a series of five fascinating case studies, Jon Western develops a complex model of the power plays and tussle for real-world effect amongst Washington's foreign policy elites."

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(Doris A. Graber *International History Review*)

"Western has done an excellent job on an important topic and his book is worth reading for any scholar studying the war, news, and public opinion connection. Students, in particular, will find this book extremely useful."

(*Political Communication*)

About the Author

Jon Western is Five College Assistant Professor of International Relations at Mount Holyoke College. He has also been on staff at the United States Institute of Peace.

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