

§ 611. Definitions

As used in and for the purposes of this subchapter—

(a) The term “person” includes an individual, partnership, association, corporation, organization, or any other combination of individuals;

(b) The term “foreign principal” includes—

(1) a government of a foreign country and a foreign political party;

(2) a person outside of the United States, unless it is established that such person is an individual and a citizen of and domiciled within the United States, or that such person is not an individual and is organized under or created by the laws of the United States or of any State or other place subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and has its principal place of business within the United States; and

(3) a partnership, association, corporation, organization, or other combination of persons organized under the laws of or having its principal place of business in a foreign country.

(c) Expect¹ as provided in subsection (d) of this section, the term “agent of a foreign principal” means—

(1) any person who acts as an agent, representative, employee, or servant, or any person who acts in any other capacity at the order, request, or under the direction or control, of a foreign principal or of a person any of whose activities are directly or indirectly supervised, directed, controlled, financed, or subsidized in whole or in major part by a foreign principal, and who directly or through any other person—

(i) engages within the United States in political activities for or in the interests of such foreign principal;

(ii) acts within the United States as a public relations counsel, publicity agent, information-service employee or political consultant for or in the interests of such foreign principal;

(iii) within the United States solicits, collects, disburses, or dispenses contributions, loans, money, or other things of value for or in the interest of such foreign principal; or

(iv) within the United States represents the interests of such foreign principal before any agency or official of the Government of the United States; and

(2) any person who agrees, consents, assumes or purports to act as, or who is or holds himself out to be, whether or not pursuant to contractual relationship, an agent of a foreign principal as defined in clause (1) of this subsection.

(d) The term “agent of a foreign principal” does not include any news or press service or association organized under the laws of the United States or of any State or other place subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, or any newspaper, magazine, periodical, or other publication for which there is on file with the United States Postal Service information in compliance with section 3611² of title 39, published in the

United States, solely by virtue of any bona fide news or journalistic activities, including the solicitation or acceptance of advertisements, subscriptions, or other compensation therefor, so long as it is at least 80 per centum beneficially owned by, and its officers and directors, if any, are citizens of the United States, and such news or press service or association, newspaper, magazine, periodical, or other publication, is not owned, directed, supervised, controlled, subsidized, or financed, and none of its policies are determined by any foreign principal defined in subsection (b) of this section, or by any agent of a foreign principal required to register under this subchapter;

(e) The term “government of a foreign country” includes any person or group of persons exercising sovereign de facto or de jure political jurisdiction over any country, other than the United States, or over any part of such country, and includes any subdivision of any such group and any group or agency to which such sovereign de facto or de jure authority or functions are directly or indirectly delegated. Such term shall include any faction or body of insurgents within a country assuming to exercise governmental authority whether such faction or body of insurgents has or has not been recognized by the United States;

(f) The term “foreign political party” includes any organization or any other combination of individuals in a country other than the United States, or any unit or branch thereof, having for an aim or purpose, or which is engaged in any activity devoted in whole or in part to, the establishment, administration, control, or acquisition of administration or control, of a government of a foreign country or a subdivision thereof, or the furtherance or influencing of the political or public interests, policies, or relations of a government of a foreign country or a subdivision thereof;

(g) The term “public-relations counsel” includes any person who engages directly or indirectly in informing, advising, or in any way representing a principal in any public relations matter pertaining to political or public interests, policies, or relations of such principal;

(h) The term “publicity agent” includes any person who engages directly or indirectly in the publication or dissemination of oral, visual, graphic, written, or pictorial information or matter of any kind, including publication by means of advertising, books, periodicals, newspapers, lectures, broadcasts, motion pictures, or otherwise;

(i) The term “information-service employee” includes any person who is engaged in furnishing, disseminating, or publishing accounts, descriptions, information, or data with respect to the political, industrial, employment, economic, social, cultural, or other benefits, advantages, facts, or conditions of any country other than the United States or of any government of a foreign country or of a foreign political party or of a partnership, association, corporation, organization, or other combination of individuals organized under the laws of, or having its principal place of business in, a foreign country;

(j) Repealed. Pub. L. 104-65, §9(1)(A), Dec. 19, 1995, 109 Stat. 699.

¹ So in original. Probably should be “Except”.

² So in original. Probably should be section “3685”.

(k) The term “registration statement” means the registration statement required to be filed with the Attorney General under section 612(a) of this title, and any supplements thereto required to be filed under section 612(b) of this title, and includes all documents and papers required to be filed therewith or amendatory thereof or supplemental thereto, whether attached thereto or incorporated therein by reference;

(l) The term “American republic” includes any of the states which were signatory to the Final Act of the Second Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the American Republics at Habana, Cuba, July 30, 1940;

(m) The term “United States”, when used in a geographical sense, includes the several States, the District of Columbia, the Territories, the Canal Zone, the insular possessions, and all other places now or hereafter subject to the civil or military jurisdiction of the United States;

(n) The term “prints” means newspapers and periodicals, books, pamphlets, sheet music, visiting cards, address cards, printing proofs, engravings, photographs, pictures, drawings, plans, maps, patterns to be cut out, catalogs, prospectuses, advertisements, and printed, engraved, lithographed, or autographed notices of various kinds, and, in general, all impressions or reproductions obtained on paper or other material assimilable to paper, on parchment or on cardboard, by means of printing, engraving, lithography, autography, or any other easily recognizable mechanical process, with the exception of the copying press, stamps with movable or immovable type, and the typewriter;

(o) The term “political activities” means any activity that the person engaging in believes will, or that the person intends to, in any way influence any agency or official of the Government of the United States or any section of the public within the United States with reference to formulating, adopting, or changing the domestic or foreign policies of the United States or with reference to the political or public interests, policies, or relations of a government of a foreign country or a foreign political party;

(p) The term “political consultant” means any person who engages in informing or advising any other person with reference to the domestic or foreign policies of the United States or the political or public interest, policies, or relations of a foreign country or of a foreign political party.

(June 8, 1938, ch. 327, §1, 52 Stat. 631; Aug. 7, 1939, ch. 521, §1, 53 Stat. 1244; Apr. 29, 1942, ch. 263, §1, 56 Stat. 249; Proc. No. 2695, July 4, 1946, 11 F.R. 7517, 60 Stat. 1352; Sept. 23, 1950, ch. 1024, title I, §20(a), 64 Stat. 1005; Aug. 1, 1956, ch. 849, §1, 70 Stat. 899; Pub. L. 87-366, §1, Oct. 4, 1961, 75 Stat. 784; Pub. L. 89-486, §1, July 4, 1966, 80 Stat. 244; Pub. L. 91-375, §6(k), Aug. 12, 1970, 84 Stat. 782; Pub. L. 104-65, §9(1), Dec. 19, 1995, 109 Stat. 699.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

For definition of Canal Zone, referred to in subsec. (m), see section 3602(b) of this title.

CODIFICATION

Words “including the Philippine Islands,” omitted from definition of “United States” in subsec. (m) pursuant to Proc. No. 2695, which granted independence to

the Philippines under the authority of section 1394 of this title, under which section Proc. No. 2695 is set out as a note.

AMENDMENTS

1995—Subsec. (j). Pub. L. 104-65, §9(1)(A), struck out subsec. (j) which read as follows: “The term ‘political propaganda’ includes any oral, visual, graphic, written, pictorial, or other communication or expression by any person (1) which is reasonably adapted to, or which the person disseminating the same believes will, or which he intends to, prevail upon, indoctrinate, convert, induce, or in any other way influence a recipient or any section of the public within the United States with reference to the political or public interests, policies, or relations of a government of a foreign country or a foreign political party or with reference to the foreign policies of the United States or promote in the United States racial, religious, or social dissensions, or (2) which advocates, advises, instigates, or promotes any racial, social, political, or religious disorder, civil riot, or other conflict involving the use of force or violence in any other American republic or the overthrow of any government or political subdivision of any other American republic by any means involving the use of force or violence. As used in this subsection the term ‘disseminating’ includes transmitting or causing to be transmitted in the United States mails or by any means or instrumentality of interstate or foreign commerce or offering or causing to be offered in the United States mails.”

Subsec. (o). Pub. L. 104-65, §9(1)(B), substituted “any activity that the person engaging in believes will, or that the person intends to, in any way influence” for “the dissemination of political propaganda and any other activity which the person engaging therein believes will, or which he intends to, prevail upon, indoctrinate, convert, induce, persuade, or in any other way influence”.

Subsec. (p). Pub. L. 104-65, §9(1)(C), substituted a period for semicolon at end.

Subsec. (q). Pub. L. 104-65, §9(1)(D), struck out subsec. (q) which read as follows: “For the purpose of section 613(d) of this title, activities in furtherance of the bona fide commercial, industrial or financial interests of a domestic person engaged in substantial commercial, industrial or financial operations in the United States shall not be deemed to serve predominantly a foreign interest because such activities also benefit the interests of a foreign person engaged in bona fide trade or commerce which is owned or controlled by, or which owns or controls, such domestic person: *Provided*, That (i) such foreign person is not, and such activities are not directly or indirectly supervised, directed, controlled, financed or subsidized in whole or in substantial part by, a government of a foreign country or a foreign political party, (ii) the identity of such foreign person is disclosed to the agency or official of the United States with whom such activities are conducted, and (iii) whenever such foreign person owns or controls such domestic person, such activities are substantially in furtherance of the bona fide commercial, industrial or financial interests of such domestic person.”

1970—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 91-375 substituted “file with the United States Postal Service information in compliance with section 3611 of title 39” for “file with the Postmaster General a sworn statement in compliance with section 2 of the Act of August 24, 1912 (37 Stat. 553), as amended”.

1966—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 89-486, §1(1), redesignated former pars. (3) and (4) as (2) and (3), substituted in such par. (3) “combination of persons” for “combination of individuals” and struck out from definition of “foreign principal” former pars. (2), (5), and (6) which included “(2) an individual affiliated or associated with, or supervised, directed, controlled, financed, or subsidized, in whole or in part, by any foreign principal defined in clause (1) of this subsection”; “(5) a domestic partnership, association, corporation, organization, or

other combination of individuals, subsidized directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, by any foreign principal defined in clause (1), (3), or (4) of this subsection"; and "(6) a domestic partnership, association, corporation, or other combination of individuals, supervised, directed, controlled, or financed, in whole or in substantial part, by any foreign government or foreign political party".

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 89-486, §1(2), amended provisions generally to redefine "agent of a foreign principal" by specifying four categories of activities creating the agency relationship where person acts as agent, employee, representative, or servant or at the order of, or under the control of, a foreign principal, by requiring a showing not only of foreign connections but also of certain activities performed by the agent for foreign interests, by making change as it relates to problem of indirect control exerted by foreign principals over their agents, by including political activities and actions as political consultant, by excluding attorneys from the relationship, by incorporating provisions of former par. (3) in par. (2) where a person assumes or purports to act as an agent of a foreign principal, and by eliminating the separate category for military or governmental officials contained in former par. (4).

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 89-486, §1(3), struck out "clause (1), (2), or (4) of" before "subsection (b)".

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 89-486, §1(4), inserted "public relations" before "matter pertaining to" and "of such principal" after "or relations".

Subsecs. (o) to (q). Pub. L. 89-486, §1(5), added subsecs. (o) to (q).

1961—Subsec. (b)(6). Pub. L. 87-366 added par. (6).

1956—Subsec. (c)(5). Act Aug. 1, 1956, repealed par. (5) which included within definition of "agent of a foreign principal" any person trained in foreign espionage systems with certain exceptions. See sections 851 and 852 of Title 50, War and National Defense.

1950—Subsec. (c)(5). Act Sept. 23, 1950, added par. (5).

1942—Act Apr. 29, 1942, amended section generally to redefine terms used in this subchapter.

1939—Act Aug. 7, 1939, amended section generally to redefine terms used in this subchapter.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1995 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 104-65 effective Jan. 1, 1996, except as otherwise provided, see section 24 of Pub. L. 104-65, set out as an Effective Date note under section 1601 of Title 2, The Congress.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1970 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 91-375 effective within 1 year after Aug. 12, 1970, on date established therefor by Board of Governors of United States Postal Service and published by it in Federal Register, see section 15(a) of Pub. L. 91-375, set out as an Effective Date note preceding section 101 of Title 39, Postal Service.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1966 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 89-486, §9, July 4, 1966, 80 Stat. 249, provided that: "This Act [enacting sections 219 and 613 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, and amending this section and sections 612 to 616 and 618 of this title] shall take effect ninety days after the date of its enactment [July 4, 1966]."

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1942 AMENDMENT

Act Apr. 29, 1942, ch. 263, §3, 56 Stat. 258, provided that: "This Act [amending this subchapter] shall take effect on the sixtieth day after the date of its approval, except that prior to such sixtieth day the Attorney General may make, prescribe, amend, and rescind such rules, regulations, and forms as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act [amending this subchapter]."

EFFECTIVE DATE

Act June 8, 1938, ch. 327, §7, 52 Stat. 633, provided that: "This Act [enacting this subchapter] shall take

effect on the ninetieth day after the date of its enactment [June 8, 1938]."

SHORT TITLE

Act June 8, 1938, ch. 327, §14, as added by act Apr. 29, 1942, ch. 263, §1, 56 Stat. 258, provided that: "This Act [enacting this subchapter] may be cited as the 'Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended'."

SEPARABILITY; EFFECT ON EXISTING LAW

Act June 8, 1938, ch. 327, §§12, 13, as added by act Apr. 29, 1942, ch. 263, §1, 56 Stat. 258, provided that:

"SEC. 12. If any provision of this Act [enacting this subchapter], or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, is held invalid, the remainder of the Act, and the application of such provisions to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected thereby.

"SEC. 13. This Act [enacting this subchapter] is an addition to and not in substitution for any other existing statute."

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Act Apr. 29, 1942, ch. 263, §2, 56 Stat. 258, provided that: "Upon the effective date of this Act [see Effective Date of 1942 Amendment note above], all powers, duties, and functions of the Secretary of State under the Act of June 8, 1938 (52 Stat. 631), as amended [this subchapter], shall be transferred to and become vested in the Attorney General, together with all property, books, records, and unexpended balances of appropriations used by or available to the Secretary of State for carrying out the functions devolving on him under the above-cited Act. All rules, regulations, and forms which have been issued by the Secretary of State pursuant to the provisions of said Act, and which are in effect, shall continue in effect until modified, superseded, revoked, or repealed."

POLICY AND PURPOSE OF SUBCHAPTER

Act June 8, 1938, ch. 327, as added by act Apr. 29, 1942, ch. 263, §1, 56 Stat. 248, provided that: "It is hereby declared to be the policy and purpose of this Act [enacting this subchapter] to protect the national defense, internal security, and foreign relations of the United States by requiring public disclosure by persons engaging in propaganda activities and other activities for or on behalf of foreign governments, foreign political parties, and other foreign principals so that the Government and the people of the United States may be informed of the identity of such persons and may appraise their statements and actions in the light of their associations and activities."

§ 612. Registration statement

(a) Filing; contents

No person shall act as an agent of a foreign principal unless he has filed with the Attorney General a true and complete registration statement and supplements thereto as required by subsections (a) and (b) of this section or unless he is exempt from registration under the provisions of this subchapter. Except as hereinafter provided, every person who becomes an agent of a foreign principal shall, within ten days thereafter, file with the Attorney General, in duplicate, a registration statement, under oath on a form prescribed by the Attorney General. The obligation of an agent of a foreign principal to file a registration statement shall, after the tenth day of his becoming such agent, continue from day to day, and termination of such status shall not relieve such agent from his obligation to file a registration statement for the period during which he was an agent of a foreign principal. The registration statement shall include