

CAPES/ CAFEP EXTERNE D'ANGLAIS

SESSION 2011

ÉPREUVE SUR DOSSIER

PREMIÈRE PARTIE

Vous procéderez en anglais à la mise en relation des documents suivants en vous appuyant sur la consigne ci-dessous :

Comment on the representation of special interests influencing power in the US.

Document A (audio) : “Lobbyists’ Cozy Ties with Congress,” an extract from a CBS news report on the links between senators/representatives and lobbyists (June 2010)

Document B : an extract from *The Family; the Real Story of the Bush Dynasty*, by Kitty Kelley (2005)

Document C: “In Defense of Lobbyists,” by Michael Barone, from his blog at usnews.com (2008)

DOCUMENT A**Lobbyists' Cozy Ties with Congress**

Audio extract from a CBS news report presented by Sharyl Attkisson on the links between senators/representatives and lobbyists. Broadcast in June 2010

Source: <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6619240n>, from 0'00'' to 2'41''.

DOCUMENT B

In the Rose Garden on March 29, 1991 [...] Still looking robust at the age of eighty, Ronald Reagan had come to Washington to accept an honorary degree from George Washington University. The Doctorate of Public Service was presented to him on the tenth anniversary of the assassination attempt that almost took his life. He had returned to the nation's capital as much to be honored as to honor the medical team that had saved him. [...]

After accepting his honorary degree, President Reagan delivered a speech that brought the audience of 1,450 to their feet:

I want to tell all of you here today something that I'm not sure you know. You do know that I'm a member of the NRA. And my position on the right to bear arms is well-known. But I want you to know something else, and I'm going to say it in clear, unmistakable language. I support the Brady bill and I urge the Congress to enact it without delay.

It's just plain common sense that there be a waiting period [seven days] to allow local law enforcement officials to conduct background checks on those who wish to buy a handgun.

The applause was deafening. The former President had just endorsed a bill named in honor of his press secretary James Brady, who was forever disabled by the handgun aimed at the President and his party in 1981. It was a bill that the current President, George H.W. Bush, opposed. [...]

"Do you think you'll persuade President Bush to change his position?"

"I'm trying to," said the former President.

George Bush quickly ushered his predecessor toward the Oval Office. [...]

And Bush scrambled to let it be known that he might be willing to accept a waiting period for handgun purchases if Congress accepted his anticrime legislation. He hoped to glom on to the popularity of the Brady Bill to get a crime bill passed that would get him reelected. [...]

The gun lobby had been whip-lashed for years trying to follow the President's flip-flops. As a Texas congressman, Bush voted for a bill that included a limitation on handguns. Yet he opposed licensing and registering his personal firearms as a resident of the District of Columbia. When he ran for President in 1988, he plunked down five hundred dollars to become a "lifetime member" of the National Rifle Association. He then opposed a ban on imports of semiautomatic weapons, for which he received the NRA's endorsement – and their \$6 million expenditure for him in the general election. Four weeks into his presidency he changed his position. After five children were mowed down by an assault rifle in a California school yard, he announced that he supported a ban on the importation of semiautomatic

weapons. A few weeks later he backed down and said he supported a ban only on imported guns with more than ten bullets in their ammunition clips.[.....]

The President had held out on the Brady Bill to appease the NRA, but by then he had alienated the powerful gun lobby as well as its opponents. In 1992, all fled from him. The NRA withheld its endorsement, which so angered Bush that he placed a call from Air Force One to Wayne LaPierre, the NRA's executive vice-president, to demand the NRA's support. But it was to no avail. The Bradys left the Republican Party and endorsed Bill Clinton, who promised to sign the Brady Bill, which he did in 1993. [....]

Kitty Kelley, *The Family; the Real Story of the Bush Dynasty*.
First Anchor Books Edition, May 2005. Pp. 502 - 506

DOCUMENT C

In Defense of Lobbyists

By Michael Barone¹

Posted: June 12, 2008

Barack Obama has long said that his campaign will not accept contributions from lobbyists, and now that he is the presumptive nominee, the Democratic National Committee won't accept them, either. John McCain says that his campaign won't employ lobbyists, and volunteers are now queried about possible lobbying activity in the past. It's only a matter of time until someone calls for a law requiring every lobbyist to paint a big, red "L" on his forehead.

Behind this stigmatization of lobbyists is the notion that the failure to produce legislation in the public interest stems from the existence of lobbyists. Which is obviously nonsense. We couldn't abolish lobbying without repealing the First Amendment, which gives all of us, even those who are paid to do it, the right to "petition the government for a redress of grievances." And the government could not sensibly do business without lobbyists.

As Hillary Clinton recognized at the YearlyKos convention last August[, w]hile Obama and John Edwards were lambasting lobbyists [...]: "You know, a lot of those lobbyists, whether you like it or not, represent real Americans. They actually do. They represent nurses. They represent, you know, social workers. They represent . . . yes, they represent corporations. They employ a lot of people."

Lobbying is as American as apple pie, going back to colonial times. The Rev. Increase Mather lobbied in London for a new charter for Massachusetts. Benjamin Franklin was the colonial

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agent—lobbyist—for Pennsylvania and other colonies. When the federal government was created, lobbyists for varied interests naturally swarmed to the capital—first New York, then Philadelphia and Washington.

It is a simple fact of life that when Congress writes laws and the executive branch writes regulations that channel vast flows of money—and laws and regulations that have vast moral implications—citizens affected by those words are going to try to make sure they're written the way they want. They're going to hire the best people they can find to do so. They want lobbyists with connections—and with expertise. They can help lawmakers understand how the words they write will affect "real Americans."

That's why I was pleased to see Clinton defend lobbying not only for those whom her Democratic audience considers good interests (nurses, social workers) but for those they don't (corporations). Implicitly, she's rejecting the distinction made by the head of the Humane Society of the United States, who recently contrasted "special-interest lobbyists" (presumably those working for profit-making interests) with "socially responsible lobbyists" (those working for nonprofits). But even lobbyists for nonprofits have a monetary motive: to keep their (often six-figure) salaries flowing in.

Source: <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/barone/2008/06/12/in-defense-of-lobbyists>