American Journalism and International Relations argues that the American press’s disengagement from world affairs has critical repercussions for American foreign policy. Giovanna Dell’Orto shows that discourses created, circulated, and maintained through the media mold opinions about the world and shape foreign policy parameters.

This book is a history of U.S. foreign correspondence from the 1840s to the present, relying on more than 2,000 news articles and twenty major world events, from the 1848 European revolutions to the Mumbai terror attacks in 2008. Americans’ perceptions of other nations, combined with pervasive and enduring understandings of the United States’ role in global politics, act as constraints on policies. Dell’Orto finds that reductive media discourse (as seen during the 1967 war in the Middle East or Afghanistan in the 1980s) has a negative effect on policy, whereas correspondence grounded in events (such as during the Japanese attack on Shanghai in the 1930s or the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991) fosters effective leadership and realistic assessments.

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For my family, my love, and for all the foreign correspondents who lost their lives while trying to shine a small light on world affairs
American Journalism and International Relations

Foreign Correspondence from the Early Republic to the Digital Era

GIOVANNA DELL’ORTO

University of Minnesota
Contents

Acknowledgments

1. Introduction: The American Press and International Relations
   A Constructivist Perspective on IR, Communication, and Journalism 3
   Constructing International Affairs 3
   Constructing Communication 9
   Constructing Foreign Correspondence 19
   Studying the Construction of the World through Foreign Correspondence 25
   Conclusions 31

2. A New Country, A New Profession: America and Its Foreign Correspondents Get Ready to Take on the World
   Journalism’s Professionalization: Nineteenth-Century Writers and Readers 35
   Getting Entangled: U.S. Foreign Relations in the Nineteenth Century 40
   America Covers the World: Nineteenth-Century Media Discourses 43
   Conclusions 64

3. America Takes Global Center Stage: The Ascent of a Political and Communication Power
   The Power of the Press: Taking on the World, in the Public’s Interest 68
   Taking the Lead: American Policy Goes Global 74
   America Covers the World: Media Discourses in the World Wars Era 106
   Conclusions 106
Contents

4. The Media Are American in the American Century: The Apex of American Political and Communication Power
   The Bulldog: U.S. Journalism Tackles the Cold War
   From a Bipolar to a Unipolar World: Winning the Cold War
   America Covers the World: Media Discourses in the Cold War
   Conclusions

5. A Web of Disentanglements: American Policy and Media Struggle to Engage the Post–Cold War World
   Clicks for All: U.S. Journalism Stumbles into the Twenty-First Century
   Redefining Power: Global Leadership in the Twenty-First Century?
   America Covers the World: Post–Cold War Media Discourses
   Conclusions

6. The Importance of Being There and Making People Care: The Troubled Present and Possible Futures of U.S. Foreign Correspondence
   Can the Market Save the Marketplace of Ideas? Possible Futures of Journalism
   Staying Power: Possible Futures of Foreign Correspondence
   It’s What We’re Here For: U.S. News Leaders Protect Foreign Reporting
   “Pretty Bloody Crucial”: International Correspondence Strategies Abroad
   Conclusions

7. Conclusion: Reaffirming Journalism’s Role in World Affairs
   The Discursive Role of Media in International Relations
   Evolving Media Discourses of the World
   Evolving Foreign Policy Paradigms
   Foreign Correspondence and World Affairs
   Conclusion: The Irreplaceable Mediator in Danger

Bibliography
Index
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While many scholars and executives wring hands over the business of new news media, a few dedicated correspondents continue to risk their lives to make some tiny addition to our collective knowledge of the world. I dedicate this book to all foreign correspondents who died for the belief that understanding should inform our actions. And, of course, I also dedicate it to my family. Most simply, without my parents, Dario Dell’Orto and Paola Casella Dell’Orto, nothing would be.