



## FOREIGN GOVERNMENT Efforts to Influence Policy & the Public

Foreign governments routinely engage in efforts to influence our domestic and foreign policies, legislation, democratic processes, and public opinion. These governments sometimes exert this influence by employing lobbyists, public relations professionals, prominent businesspeople, or former U.S. government officials on their behalf. Such efforts are legal—if they are transparent.

Originally enacted in 1938, the Foreign Agents Registration Act—known as FARA—helps the

American people and their elected officials understand who is really behind such influence activity. The statute requires persons working on behalf of foreign governments or other foreign principals (including Americans) to disclose their relationships to foreign principals and information about their activities.

Agents who fail to register are violating federal law, and they can be prosecuted if their failure is deliberate.

## How FARA Works

The Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) Unit, which is part of the U.S. Department of Justice's National Security Division, administers and enforces FARA. Agents who register must disclose their agreements with foreign principals, report the amounts and sources of funding they have received, and provide a log of all activities they have performed on behalf of foreign principals. Agents must also label informational materials they disseminate to disclose their agency relationship, and file copies of those materials with the Unit.

FARA's definition of foreign principals includes foreign governments, political parties, corporations, individuals, and nongovernmental organizations. It defines agents as those who act at the request of or under the direction, control, or order of a foreign principal.

FARA requires an agent of a foreign principal to register when engaging in political activities or those designed to influence the U.S. government or

public regarding domestic or foreign policy; taking part in perception management efforts or acting as a public relations counsel, publicity agent, or information service employee; performing fundraising or disbursement of funds; or lobbying Congress or the Executive Branch.

FARA includes exemptions for certain agents who register with the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives under the Lobbying Disclosure Act and are therefore permitted to lobby the Legislative or Executive Branches. However, this exemption is not available to agents of foreign governments or foreign political parties—or when a foreign government or foreign political party is the principal beneficiary of the lobbying activities. Covert foreign influence campaigns often run afoul of this provision.

Read FARA at 22 U.S.C. § 611 et seq., and learn more at [www.fara.gov](http://www.fara.gov).

*FARA helps protect the integrity of American democracy by combating covert foreign government influence in our political process.*

—Assistant Attorney General  
John C. Demers

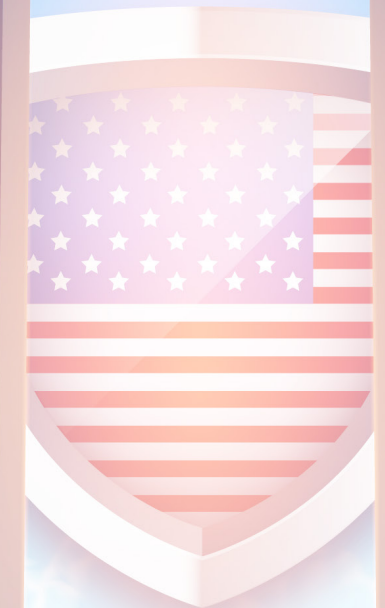
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# FARA

Foreign Agents Registration Act

Protecting the  
United States from  
**COVERT FOREIGN  
INFLUENCE**





# IDENTIFYING UNREGISTERED FOREIGN AGENTS

*How can you tell if someone might be acting as an agent of a foreign principal and might be required by FARA to register with the Department of Justice?  
You could encounter a scenario like one of these:*

## SCENARIO 1

**A PROMINENT BUSINESSMAN** schedules an appointment to discuss energy policy. While you expect the meeting to focus on how U.S. policy affects his company or industry, instead he discusses an unrelated topic: a foreign country's image in the United States. During the discussion, the businessman seems to repeat statements previously made by the foreign country's leaders or spokespeople.

## SCENARIO 2

**A FORMER CONGRESSMAN** arranges a meeting to discuss tariffs on agricultural products, but the topic seems outside his scope or areas of interest, as he previously represented an urban district and was uninvolved in agricultural or trade policy. When you meet, the former Congressman does not discuss tariffs but instead focuses on a foreign country's high-profile and longstanding request to release a prominent dissident, mirroring talking points used by the foreign country's leaders or spokespeople.

## SCENARIO 3

**A LOBBYIST** requests a meeting to discuss telecommunications infrastructure, but when she arrives, she is accompanied by members of a foreign government or political party. They do most of the talking, discussing only the significance of telecommunications infrastructure to the foreign country—not to any U.S. businesses or companies—and highlighting issues significant to their country's relationship with the United States.

## SCENARIO 4

**A LOBBYIST** arranges a meeting with you, and you confirm he has registered under the Lobbying Disclosure Act. However, when you meet, the lobbyist discusses topics of interest to foreign entities that are not mentioned in his filings.

*Any of these scenarios could indicate you have come in contact with an unregistered agent of a foreign principal.*

*If you suspect you've encountered an unregistered agent of a foreign government, contact your local FBI field office or the Department of Justice's FARA Unit.*

