

COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS



COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS 2003–2004

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BRIEF HISTORY

After the difficult negotiations of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, a group of diplomats, financiers, generals, and lawyers concluded that Americans needed to be better prepared for significant responsibilities and decision-making in world affairs. With this in mind, they founded the Council on Foreign Relations in 1921 to “afford a continuous conference on international questions affecting the United States, by bringing together experts on statecraft, finance, industry, education, and science.”

The Council’s early members believed it was important for the Council to be both nonpartisan and noncommercial. Members (restricted to U.S. citizens and by invitation only) were chosen for their knowledge of foreign affairs and their ability to contribute to the Council’s discussions and studies. The Council carried out its mission by inviting important statesmen to speak and answer questions at meetings and by forming small groups to discuss serious issues of the day and publish their findings.

TODAY'S MISSION

The Council on Foreign Relations is an independent, national membership organization and a nonpartisan center for scholars dedicated to producing and disseminating ideas so that individual and corporate members, as well as policymakers, journalists, students, and interested citizens in the United States and other countries, can better understand the world and the foreign policy choices facing the United States and other governments. The Council, which is headquartered in New York with an office in Washington, does this by:

- Convening meetings in New York, Washington, and other select cities where senior government officials, global leaders, and prominent thinkers come together with Council members to debate and discuss the major issues of our time;
- Conducting a wide-ranging Studies Program where Council fellows produce articles and books that analyze foreign policy issues and make concrete policy recommendations;
- Publishing *Foreign Affairs*, the preeminent journal covering international affairs and U.S. foreign policy;
- Maintaining a diverse membership, including special programs to foster interest and expertise in the next generation of foreign policy leaders;
- Sponsoring Independent Task Forces whose reports help set the public foreign policy agenda;
- Providing up-to-date information about the world and U.S. foreign policy on the Council’s website—www.cfr.org.



Former Secretary of State and Nobel Peace Prize–winner Elihu Root (second from left) was one of the founders of the Council on Foreign Relations. He is shown here (left to right) with Council President John W. Davis, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, and *Foreign Affairs* Editor Hamilton Fish Armstrong.

TIMELINE

- 1921** Council on Foreign Relations founded
- 1922** Council publishes the first issue of *Foreign Affairs: An American Quarterly Review*
- 1923** First study groups: “Postwar Financial and Economic Problems” and “Dangerous Areas in Europe”
- 1930s** Council begins programming for audiences across the country
- 1947** *Foreign Affairs* publishes “Sources of Soviet Conduct” by “X” (George F. Kennan)
- 1956** Corporate membership program inaugurated
- 1957** Henry Kissinger’s book *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, based on findings of a Council study group, is national best-seller
- 1967** International Affairs Fellowship Program launched
- 1970** Term membership introduced
- 1972** Council opens Washington office
- 1993** *Foreign Affairs* publishes Samuel P. Huntington’s “The Clash of Civilizations?”
- 1995** Council publishes first Independent Task Force report
- 1997** Council launches www.cfr.org
- 1999** New Peter G. Peterson Hall offers state-of-the-art videoconferencing facilities
- 2002** Council debuts the nation’s first online encyclopedia of terrorism





Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld with Council Chairman Peter G. Peterson.

The Council's 4,200 members are American citizens who were nominated and seconded by other members for election by the Board of Directors. Approximately one-third live in the New York area, one-third in and around Washington, and one-third across the rest of the country and overseas. Of these, some 550 younger (or Term) members between the ages of 28 and 36 are elected to five-year terms. Term members are subsequently eligible for election to life membership.

Executives from the Council's Corporate membership — 200 leading international companies representing a range of sectors — participate in a variety of programs of special relevance to the business and financial communities.

The Council has a staff of over 200 — of whom 40 are in the Washington office — an annual operating budget of approximately \$30 million, and an endowment of more than \$160 million. It is funded primarily by members' dues and donations to the annual fund; Corporate Program dues; special gifts from members and other individuals; grants from foundations and corporations; the endowment; and income from *Foreign Affairs*. The Council receives no funding from the U.S. government.



UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

INFLUENTIAL FORUM

The Council's legendary convening power derives from its members, who are leaders in virtually every sector of American society and represent a broad range of policy perspectives. Each year, the Council organizes more than 200 events for members in New York and Washington, including history-maker interviews, debates, experts' panels, conversations with authors of important new books, videoconferences, conference calls, book clubs, and film screenings. For members across the country, the Council organizes dozens of local roundtable sessions built around the expertise of members; dinner seminars featuring Council fellows; biweekly conference calls; teleconferences and webcasts of meetings; and an annual conference that draws hundreds of national members to New York.

With new threats such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and global epidemics replacing the old Cold War dangers, the United States faces urgent security and foreign policy challenges. Informed debate about

America's role in the world and the strategy needed to accomplish U.S. goals are the central focus of Council programs. In recent months, Council members met with such leaders as Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and John S. McCain (R-AZ), former Secretaries of State Henry A. Kissinger, Madeleine K. Albright, and James A. Baker III; and the leaders of Afghanistan, Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, and the Philippines.

While most Council programs are not for attribution, in an effort to reach a broader audience the Council has increasingly opened meetings to journalists and posted transcripts from meetings on its website — www.cfr.org.



Council President Richard N. Haass with Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai.

Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan with Council Vice Chairman Carla A. Hills.

THINK TANK

The Studies Program—the Council’s “think tank”—is comprised of more than 50 full- and part-time scholars (called fellows) and researchers who cover every major region and significant issue shaping today’s international agenda. They contribute to the foreign policy debate by writing books, articles, and op-eds on the most important challenges facing the United States and the world.

The program’s current research priorities include: What should the United States do with its primacy, and how should it advance its goals? What is both desirable and realistic in terms of global governance? What is the role of other major and medium powers, and what should the United States do to shape the behaviors of these states? What can be done to promote political and economic reform as well as moderation and tolerance in the Arab and Islamic worlds? How can the United States increase the odds that critical countries, including Pakistan, Indonesia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, “succeed” and become relatively stable and open?

The Studies Program’s activities take a variety of forms:

Roundtable discussions connect fellows with Council members and other experts and provide opportunities for informal discussion of major issues. For example, the roundtable on the Middle East and Islam is focusing on America’s ability to build productive relationships with Islamic states and peoples and on America’s role in stanching the terrorist threat.

Study Groups provide a venue for members and outside experts to critique the manuscripts that fellows are writing. For example, a current Study Group on revolutions in military affairs is discussing the effects of major technological changes in warfare and applying the lessons of history to the question of the longevity of American primacy.

Independent Task Forces, which are overseen by the Council’s president, reach meaningful consensus on current policy problems through private and nonpartisan deliberations, at the end of which the group issues a report with its recommendations. In the last year, Task Forces made recommendations for U.S. policies relating to rebuilding Iraq, the development of nonlethal weapons and capabilities, the future of transatlantic relations, and U.S. relations with India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

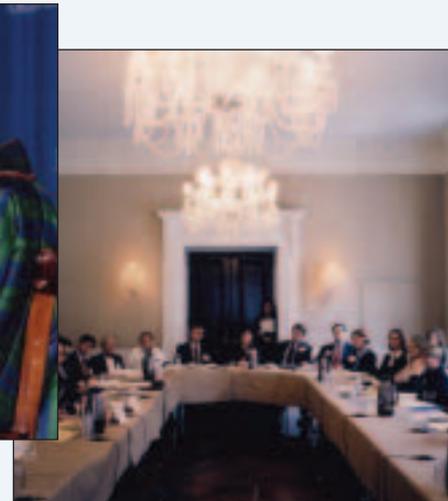
Council Policy Initiatives (CPIs) are designed to foster public debate by making the best case for two or more alternative views on a critical foreign policy issue. These arguments are published in the form of policy memos or presidential speeches. A recent CPI presented three different perspectives on the Bush administration’s National Security Strategy.



General Wesley Clark with Term Members at the Term Member Conference.



Maurice R. Greenberg with Council Term Members.



Current and former International Affairs Fellows meet on the Middle East.



South Africa’s President Thabo Mbeki with Council Vice Chairman Robert E. Rubin.



King Abdullah of Jordan (middle) with former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright and former Senator George J. Mitchell.



Within the Studies Program are two research centers. The Maurice R. Greenberg Center for Geoeconomic Studies takes an interdisciplinary approach to the linkages among economics, foreign policy, and national security; and the Center for Preventive Action offers tangible and practical strategies for preventing or mitigating deadly conflict, drawing on lessons learned from previous conflicts.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE PUBLIC DEBATE

One of the Council's principal goals is to help inform the country's foreign policy debate and to provide citizens with reliable, accessible, nonpartisan information and background. Council fellows contribute their expertise to major print, broadcasts, and online news media outlets through interviews, articles, op-eds, and commentaries. Books written by fellows are published by leading commercial and university presses. The Council on Foreign Relations Press publishes Council-sponsored Independent Task Force reports and other policy papers. For a list of publications, as well as the full text of many of them, visit the Council's website at www.cfr.org.



Forty percent of meetings are on the record and open to the press.



The Council's website at www.cfr.org.

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This website is a 'first stop' for those seeking information on global developments and international affairs. Visitors to the site can find a wide range of Council material, including work from the think tank, interviews, an online encyclopedia of terrorism, and an entire section dedicated to foreign policy issues in the 2004 presidential election. Links to the Council's website frequently appear on the sites of top news organizations and leading universities, in addition to numerous libraries, embassies, and think tanks.

Foreign Affairs, the leading journal of international relations, publishes insightful commentary on global politics, diplomacy, and economics from experts representing a wide range of views. Among its best-known articles is "Sources of Soviet Conduct" by George F. Kennan, writing in 1947 under the pseudonym "X," which first laid out the case for containment of the Soviet Union. Another widely read essay is Samuel P. Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations?" which in 1993 predicted growing conflicts between "the West and the rest."



Founded as a quarterly in 1922, *Foreign Affairs* is now published six times a year and has a circulation of 130,000. *Foreign Affairs* books, including customized textbooks, have helped make the magazine a staple in college courses. The *Foreign Affairs* website—www.foreignaffairs.org—features the full text of articles back to 1973, background briefings, and other resources, including links to the three international versions of the magazine—Spanish, Japanese, and Russian.



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