

COUNCIL *on*
FOREIGN
RELATIONS

Membership



Membership

“The Council on Foreign Relations after ninety years remains at its core a membership organization.”

—CFR President Richard N. Haass

Founded in 1921, CFR’s ranks have included many of the most prominent leaders in the foreign policy arena. CFR’s Board of Directors is led by Co-Chairs Carla A. Hills and Robert E. Rubin, who succeeded former chairs Peter G. Peterson and David Rockefeller. The Board of Directors includes former secretaries of state Madeleine K. Albright and Colin L. Powell; journalists Tom Brokaw and Fareed Zakaria; corporate heads Henry R. Kravis and Frederick W. Smith; and many other influential individuals.

Today, with over 4,500 members, CFR’s roster includes top government officials, renowned scholars, business executives, acclaimed journalists, prominent lawyers, and distinguished nonprofit professionals. Representing a group unmatched in accomplishment and diversity in the field of international affairs, the membership is divided almost equally among those living in New York, Washington, DC, and across the country and abroad.



Richard N. Haass

TERM MEMBERSHIP

The Stephen M. Kellen Term Member Program, established to cultivate the next generation of foreign policy leaders, encourages promising young women and men from diverse backgrounds to engage in a sustained conversation on international affairs and U.S. foreign policy. Each year a new class of term members between the ages of thirty and thirty-six is elected to serve a five-year term.



Left: President of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf speaking at a CFR meeting. *Right:* Term members participating in the annual conference.

The Member Experience

UNPARALLELED ACCESS

“CFR is a unique body that convenes a broad spectrum of leaders who influence U.S. economic and public policy.”—Chairman and CEO Emeritus of Caterpillar Inc. James W. Owens

Members have in-person access to world leaders, senior government officials, members of Congress, prominent thinkers and practitioners in academia, policy, and business, and fellow CFR members. Recent speakers have included Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board Ben Bernanke, Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh, Managing Director of the IMF Christine M. Lagarde, and CEO of General Electric Jeffrey R. Immelt.

INFLUENTIAL FORUM

*“CFR has maintained its relevance even as the world is changing dramatically.”
—Former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft*

Each year, CFR organizes nearly one thousand events for members in New York, Washington, and in select cities across the country and around the world, providing a nonpartisan forum for members to interact with and gain insight from leaders in the foreign policy arena. These events include roundtable discussions, experts’ panels, small foreign policy seminars, book clubs, and film screenings. Members can also participate virtually through conference calls and webcasts of certain New York and Washington meetings.

RESOURCES AND INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL

*“CFR is a repository, a reference shelf on everything going on in the world.”
—Anchor and Managing Editor of NBC Nightly News Brian Williams*

Member resources are vast and include CFR’s “think tank” and its wide array of publications and briefing materials. Members have access to exclusive content on CFR.org and ForeignAffairs.com and receive a complimentary subscription to *Foreign Affairs*, CFR’s flagship publication. In addition, members receive the *Chronicle*, a monthly members-only newsletter that highlights CFR happenings.

EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

“You can’t fundamentally understand a problem unless you bring a very diverse range of perspectives to it.”—Independent Scholar Mahnaz Ispahani

Members enjoy many opportunities to discuss foreign policy with CFR fellows and staff, speakers, experts, and other members. Study groups and advisory groups provide venues for experts to critique manuscripts and other content that CFR fellows are producing. Members may also contribute to nonpartisan, CFR-sponsored Independent Task Forces, which publish reports offering comprehensive policy prescriptions for major issues facing the U.S. government.



Left: Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaking at CFR's Washington, DC, office.

Right: Members Joan Spero, Jami Miscik, and Ann M. Fudge at a CFR meeting in New York.

Applying for Membership

CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP

Quality, diversity, and balance are the main objectives sought by CFR in the composition of its membership. Criteria for membership include intellectual attainment and expertise; degree of experience, interest, and current involvement in international affairs; promise of future achievement and service in foreign relations; potential contributions to CFR's work; desire and ability to participate in CFR activities; and standing among peers. CFR membership is restricted to U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States who have made application to become citizens. Candidates for term membership must be thirty to thirty-six years of age on January 1 of the year following the application deadline.

APPLICATION PROCESS

In order to apply, candidates must complete an online application and be nominated in writing by one CFR member and seconded by a minimum of three other individuals (maximum of four). Candidates for term membership must be nominated in writing by one CFR member and seconded by a minimum of two other individuals (maximum of three). To request access to the online application, candidates should email applications@cfr.org.

ANNUAL DEADLINES

Membership: March 1 and October 1

Term Membership: November 1

TO LEARN MORE

For more information on the application process and eligibility requirements, please visit the Membership Affairs website: www.cfr.org/about/membership.



CFR Co-Chairman Robert E. Rubin, CFR member Frank J. Caufield, Co-Chairman Carla A. Hills, and Board member Fareed Zakaria.

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David Rockefeller and Peter G. Peterson, former chairs of the CFR Board of Directors, at a CFR event.

CFR Mission

The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) is an independent, nonpartisan membership organization, think tank, and publisher dedicated to being a resource for its members, government officials, business executives, journalists, educators and students, civic and religious leaders, and other interested citizens in order to help them better understand the world and the foreign policy choices facing the United States and other countries.

To learn more about membership or the application process, please contact Membership Affairs at 212.434.9484 or applications@cfr.org. Additional information can be found in CFR's Annual Report at www.cfr.org/about/annual_report.

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