

The American Empire and Its Media

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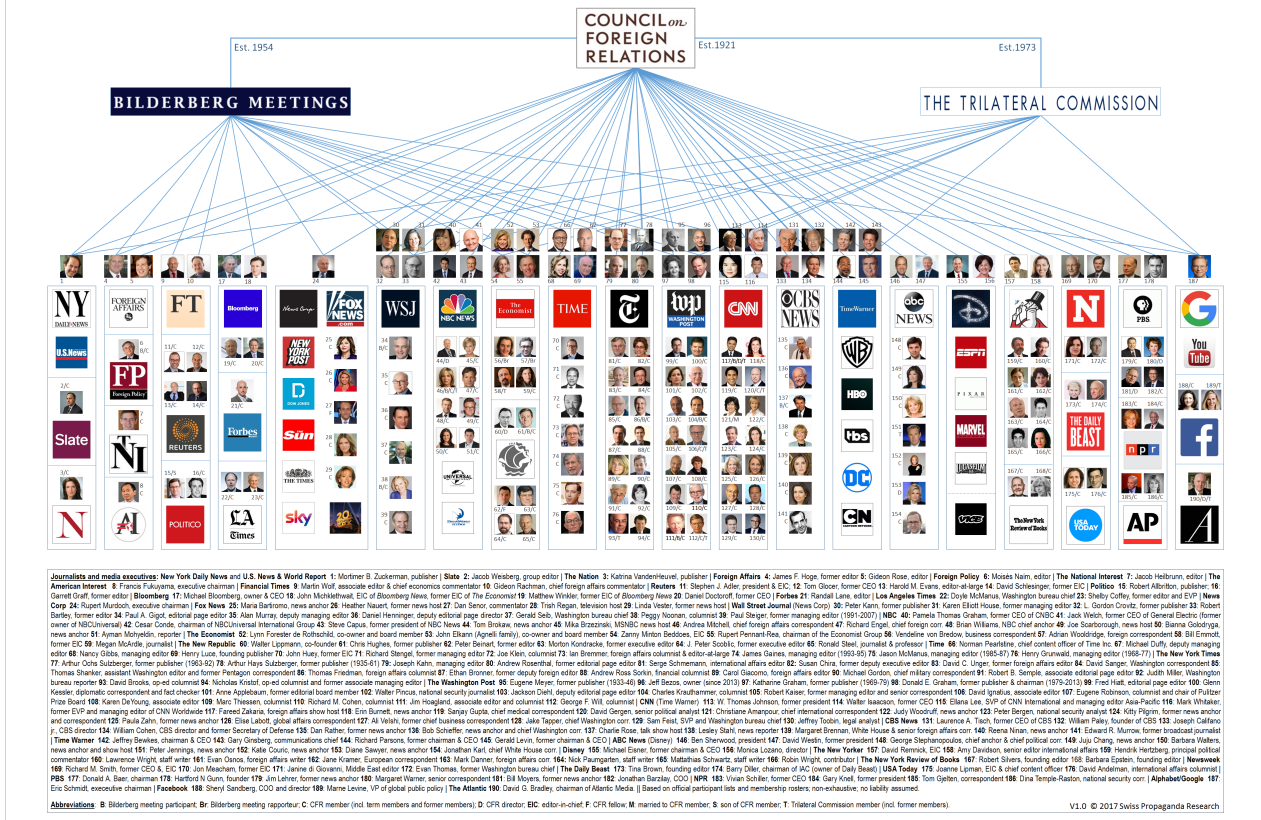
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Largely unbeknownst to the public, many media executives and top journalists of almost all major U.S. news outlets, political and business magazines, public broadcasters and press agencies have long been members of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR).

Established in 1921 as a private, bipartisan organization, the CFR and its close to 5000 elite members have for decades shaped U.S. foreign policy and public discourse about it. As one Council member [famously explained](#), their goal has indeed been to establish an “empire”, albeit a “benevolent” one.

Based on official membership rosters, the following illustration for the first time depicts the extensive media network of the CFR and its two main international affiliate organizations: the *Bilderberg Group* (covering the U.S. and Europe) and the *Trilateral Commission* (covering North America, Europe and East Asia), both established by Council leaders to foster cooperation between international elites.

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In a column titled [“Ruling Class Journalists”](#), former *Washington Post* senior editor and ombudsman Richard Harwood once described the Council and its members as “the nearest thing we have to a ruling establishment in the United States”.

Harwood continued:

“The membership of these journalists in the Council, however they may think of themselves, is an acknowledgment of their active and important role in public affairs and of their ascension into the American ruling class. They do not merely analyze and interpret foreign policy for the United States; they help make it. (.) They are part of that establishment whether they like it or not, sharing most of its values and world views.”

However, media personalities constitute only a small part of the comprehensive CFR network. As the following illustration shows, key members of the *Council on Foreign Relations* have included:

- several U.S. Presidents and Vice Presidents of both parties;
- almost all Secretaries of State, Defense, and the Treasury;
- many high-ranking commanders of the military and NATO;
- almost all National Security Advisors, CIA Directors, Ambassadors to the U.N., Chairs of the Federal Reserve, Presidents of the World Bank, and Directors of the National Economic Council;
- some of the most influential Members of Congress (notably in foreign & security policy matters);
- several media and entertainment executives, top journalists, and Hollywood actors;

- many prominent academics, especially in key fields such as Economics, International Relations, Political Science, History and Journalism;
- many top executives of Wall Street, policy think tanks, universities, and NGOs;
- as well as the key members of both the 9/11 Commission and the Warren Commission (JFK)

In an article titled [“The American Establishment”](#), political columnist Richard H. Rovere once wrote:

“The directors of the CFR make up a sort of Presidium for that part of the Establishment that guides our destiny as a nation. () [I]t rarely fails to get one of its members, or at least one of its allies, into the White House. In fact, it generally is able to see to it that both nominees are men acceptable to it.”

Indeed, until recently this assessment seems to have been largely justified. Thus, in 1993 former CFR director George H.W. Bush was followed by CFR member Bill Clinton, who in turn was followed by CFR “family member” George W. Bush. In 2008, CFR member John McCain lost against CFR candidate of choice, Barack Obama, who [received](#) the names of his entire Cabinet already one month prior to his election by CFR Senior Fellow (and Citigroup banker) [Michael Froman](#). Froman later negotiated the TTP and TTIP free trade agreements, before returning to the CFR as a *Distinguished Fellow*.

It was not until the 2016 election that the Council couldn’t, apparently, prevail. At any rate, not yet.

Sources

1. Council on Foreign Relations:

- Membership rosters, [1922 to 2013](#) and [2016](#)
- CFR members in U.S. Administrations, [1900 to 2014](#)

2. Bilderberg conference: participant lists [1954 to 2014](#) and [2015-2017](#)

3. Trilateral Commission: membership lists of [1973](#); [1978](#); [1985](#); [1995](#); [2010](#); and [2017](#)

4. Laurence H. Shoup (2015): [Wall Street’s Think Tank: The Council on Foreign Relations and the Empire of Neoliberal Geopolitics, 1976-2014](#), Monthly Review Press

5. Wikipedia pages about the [CFR](#), the [Bilderberg Group](#), and the [Trilateral Commission](#)

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