

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The American Committees on Foreign Relations is a non-partisan, national confederation of city Committees dedicated to dialogue on foreign relations between local and regional civic leaders in the heartland of America and policy makers, practitioners, and other experts drawn from both U.S. and foreign sources.

ACFR is a central facilitator in public dialogue on every aspect of foreign relations. ACFR meetings (250-300 annually around the country) are meant to be on the cutting edge of events and policy. Our purpose is to engender a much needed attentiveness to global trends and their impact on foreign policy. ACFR Committee Members know well that the war on terrorism, our domestic security, our pursuit of beneficial commercial and cultural exchanges, and the pursuit of a free and just international order are challenges that must be understood and furthered by an engaged citizenry. Like the period of WWII and the Cold War, the struggles of the 21st century will be lengthy, difficult, and complicated. And they, too, will not succeed unless there is an informed and sustained willingness on the part of the American people to support (as well as to intelligently challenge) policies over time.

We believe that responsible participation in the American public dialogue on foreign policy cannot simply be "listening" to what Washington has to say to the American public in general. Accordingly, ACFR means to broaden the conversation through more intimate, face-to-face discussions and conversations between local and regional civic leaders and national (and international) foreign relations experts. We believe that heartland Americans need to contribute to national deliberations so that policies are truly in the enlightened national interest. American civic leaders must be embraced as informed, concerned citizens, as partners in policy, and as the international citizen-actors they have increasingly become.