

José Aznar, Distinguished Fellow

José María Aznar was born in Madrid in 1953. He is:

- Practicing lawyer
- Executive President of FAES (The Foundation for Social Studies and Analysis)
- Honorary Chairman of the Partido Popular
- Member of the Board of Directors of News Corporation
- Distinguished Fellow of the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University, chairing the Atlantic Basin Initiative
- Member of the International Advisory Board of the Atlantic Council of the United States and Co-Chairman of the Atlantic Council's Transatlantic Task Force on Latin America
- Chairman of the Friends of Israel Initiative
- Member of the International Advisory Board of Barrick Gold Corporation
- Senior Advisor to the Global Board of DLA Piper

He became President of Spain in 1996, following the electoral victory of the Partido Popular. With the party's subsequent electoral victory in the year 2000, this time with an absolute majority, he led the country again for a new term. His time as President lasted until the elections of 2004, when he voluntarily chose not to run for office again.

Throughout his two terms as President of the Government he led an important process of economic and social reform. Thanks to various liberalisation processes and the introduction of measures to promote competition, along with budgetary controls, rationalised public spending and tax reductions, almost 5 million jobs were created in Spain. The Spanish GDP figure grew each year by more than 2%, at an average of 3.4% in fact, featuring an aggregate increase of 64% over eight years. Throughout this period, Spain's average income increased from 78% to 87% of the average income of the European Union. The public deficit decreased from an alarming 6% of GDP to a balanced budget. Furthermore, the first two reductions on the income tax that democratic Spain has ever known took place during his two terms in office.

One of José María Aznar's most serious concerns is the battle against terrorism. He advocates a firm policy, one that is against any kind of political concession, combined with close international cooperation between democratic countries. He is a strong supporter of the Atlantic Relationship and the European Union's commitment to freedoms and economic reform.

He is the Honorary Chairman of the Partido Popular, a party he chaired between 1990 and 2004. Until the year 2006 he was the Chairman of the Centrist Democrat International (CDI) and Vice-

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Chairman of the International Democrat Union (IDU), the two international organisations that bring together the parties of the Centre, along with Liberals, Christian Democrats and Conservatives throughout the world.

José María Aznar began his political career in the political party known as Alianza Popular, in 1979. In 1982 he was elected a Member of Parliament for Ávila. He then went on to become the Regional Chairman of Alianza Popular in Castile-Leon and the Head of the Regional Government of Castile-Leon between 1987 and 1989. In 1989, following the re-founding of the Partido Popular, he was chosen as the party's candidate for President in the general elections of 1989. The following year he was elected Chairman of the Party. He led the Partido Popular in the elections of 1993, 1996 and the year 2000. Throughout these four terms, he served as a Member of Parliament for Madrid. Between 1989 and 1996 he was the Leader of the Opposition.

José María Aznar graduated in law at the Universidad Complutense. He qualified as an Inspector of State Finances in 1975. He was Distinguished Scholar at the University of Georgetown from 2004 to 2011.

He has written the following books: *Memorias I* (2012) *España puede salir de la crisis* (2009) (*Spain Can Get Out of the Crisis*), *Cartas a un joven español* (2007) (*Letters to a Young Spaniard*), *Retratos y perfiles. De Fraga a Bush* (2005) (*Portraits and Profiles: From Fraga to Bush*), *Ocho años de Gobierno* (2004) (*Eight Years in Government*), *La España en que yo creo* (1995) (*The Spain I Believe in*), *España: la segunda transición* (1994) (*Spain: The Second Transition*) and *Libertad y Solidaridad* (1991) (*Freedom and Solidarity*).

José María Aznar has been awarded honorary doctorates by Sophia University in Tokyo (1997), Florida International University (1998), Bar-Ilan University in Israel (2005), Universidad Andrés Bello in Chile (2006), Universidad Francisco Marroquín in Guatemala (2006), Università Cattolica Sacro Cuore in Milán (2007), Universidad Cardenal Herrera CEU in Valencia (2009), Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola in Perú (2009), Ilia Chavchavadze University in Georgia (2009), Universidad San Antonio in Murcia (2010) and Universidad de las Américas in Ecuador (2011). He is Honorary Professor by the Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas in Perú (2006) as well as Professor of Ethics by Universidad San Antonio in Murcia (2009).

He is married to Ana Botella, with whom he has three children and five grandchildren.

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