

Bilderberg Council.

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If you wanted to make people believe there is a conspiracy of wealthy right-wingers ruling the world you'd create something like the Bilderberg Council. This little-known group was formed in the early 1950s, and its first meeting was at the Bilderberg Hotel in Oosterbeek, the Netherlands. Its members have been described by the Toronto Star as North America and Europe's "business, political, and academic elite." In 1996, the meeting was held at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce Leadership Centre, north of Toronto. The guest list, which organizers try to keep secret, is said to have included: Prime Minister Jean Chretien, Finance Minister Paul Martin, the Chief Executive Officers of Fiat, Xerox, Goldman Sachs, and many other large corporations, a couple of reigning monarchs, several heads of governments, university professors, directors of economics think tanks, and various others. It's the world's A-team of international powerbrokers.

Bilderberg meetings are generally held in remote locations making it easier to throw a security cordon around its members. What goes on in the meetings is completely secret. There's nothing sinister about the Bilderberg Council according to its members. It's a chance for members to discuss world affairs off-the-record and away from the glare of publicity; in this way they can be frank and open. Many outsiders are not so sure the Bilderberg Council is as innocent as all that. Jim Tucker has been following the group for 15 years and he's doubtful. Mr. Tucker is a reporter for the right-wing weekly The Spotlight, which is based in Washington. Interviewed in the British magazine Punch in 1998, he said: "They want you to believe they are simply improving international relations. But, they are controlling the world and making decisions that influence all of us with absolutely no democratic control on what they do."

There are plenty who go further. Websites on the Bilderberg Council range from those of thoughtful critics to outrageous conspiracy theorists. Some critics accuse the group of manipulating global finances and establishing rigid and binding monetary rates around the world. Others say it selects political figures the Bilderberg decrees should become rulers, and targets those it wants removed from power. Some even believe the Bilderbergers decide which countries will wage war on others.