

# Are the people who 'really run the world' meeting this weekend?

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## The Bilderberg group, the topic of many conspiracy theories, is now meeting behind closed doors in Greece.

By Adam Abrams

From today until May 17, approximately 150 of the most influential members of the world's elite will be meeting behind closed doors at a hotel in Greece. They are called the Bilderberg Group or the "Bilderbergers," and you have probably never heard of them.

The group, co-founded by Prince Bernard of the Netherlands, has been meeting in secret every year since 1954. This year, says the British broadsheet [The Times](#), they are meeting at the Nafsika Astir Palace in Vouliagmeni.

The individuals at the meeting come from such power houses as Google and the Wall Street Journal, the U.S. Senate and European royalty. Governments, the banking industry, big oil, media and even the world of academia are amongst the Bilderberg ranks.

Those reportedly in attendance at last year's conference in Virginia include former U.S. senator Tom Daschle; Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner and his predecessor Henry M. Paulson; former U.S. secretaries of state Henry Kissinger and Condoleezza Rice; Microsoft executive Craig Mundie; senior Wall Street Journal editor Paul Gigot; World Bank President Robert Zoellick and Google CEO Eric Schmidt.

There is no official list of who's who in Bilderberg and there are no press conferences about the meetings. This is because the group operates under the ["Chatham House Rule"](#), and no details of what goes on inside are released to the press.

This secrecy has led to many claims that the Bilderberg Group are the world's real "kingmakers," and, some even suggest, behind the global financial crisis.

There are also rumors concerning Bilderberg's 2008 conference in Virginia, claiming that the recent U.S. presidential election was decided upon in a secret meeting between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, courtesy of Bilderberg.

Those involved in Bilderberg reject such claims outright, arguing that the forum offers a chance for world leaders to discuss international affairs openly and honestly.

Former British cabinet minister, Lord Denis Healey, who was one of the founders of the group, branded assumptions of world domination as "crap!" and said that the group's aims were much purer.

In an [interview](#) to journalist Jon Ronson of the Guardian, Healey said: "Those of us in Bilderberg felt we couldn't go on forever fighting one another for nothing and killing people and rendering millions homeless. So we felt that a single community throughout the world would be a good thing."

Veteran Bilderberg-watcher Daniel Estulin says that the big topic on the agenda for this year is the global depression.

Estulin quotes sources connected to the group as saying that the group is looking at two options, "either a prolonged, agonizing depression that dooms the world to decades of stagnation, decline, and poverty... or an intense-but-shorter depression that paves the way for a new sustainable economic world order, with less sovereignty but more efficiency."

As the [BBC's](#) Jonathan Duffy noted in 2004, the air of mystery has fueled the increasingly popular conspiracy theory that the Bilderberg meetings are where decisions affecting the entire world are made.

"No reporters are invited in and while confidential minutes of meetings are taken, names are not noted," Duffy wrote. "In the void created by such aloofness, an extraordinary conspiracy theory has grown up around the group that alleges the fate of the world is largely decided by Bilderberg."

Recently, mainstream press coverage of the Bilderberg meeting has grown, largely due to the internet. This year's conference may have been

covered by British broadsheets, but don't expect to see any coverage from U.S. news outlets such as The Wall Street Journal or the Washington Post - they will most likely be at the conference.

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/objects/pages/PrintArticleEn.jhtml?itemNo=1085589>