

Trilateral Commission - Wikipedia

The **Trilateral Commission** is a non-governmental, non-partisan discussion group founded by [David Rockefeller](#) in July 1973 to foster closer cooperation among [Japan](#), [Western Europe](#), and [North America](#).^{[1][2]}

History^{[[edit](#)]}

Founding^{[[edit](#)]}

The Trilateral Commission was formed in 1973 by private citizens of Japan, North American nations (the U.S. and Canada), and Western European nations^[2] to foster substantive political and economic dialogue across the world. The idea of the Commission was developed in the early [1970s](#), a time of considerable discord among the United States and its allies in Western Europe, Japan and Canada.^[3] To quote its founding declaration:

- "Growing interdependence is a fact of life of the contemporary world. It transcends and influences national systems... While it is important to develop greater cooperation among all the countries of the world, Japan, Western Europe, and North America, in view of their great weight in the world economy

and their massive relations with one another, bear a special responsibility for developing effective cooperation, both in their own interests and in those of the rest of the world."

- "To be effective in meeting common problems, Japan, Western Europe, and North America will have to consult and cooperate more closely, on the basis of equality, to develop and carry out coordinated policies on matters affecting their common interests... refrain from unilateral actions incompatible with their interdependence and from actions detrimental to other regions... [and] take advantage of existing international and regional organizations and further enhance their role."
- "The Commission hopes to play a creative role as a channel of free exchange of opinions with other countries and regions. Further progress of the developing countries and greater improvement of East-West relations will be a major concern."^[4]

[Zbigniew Brzezinski](#), a Rockefeller advisor who was a specialist on international affairs (and later [President Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor](#) from 1977 to 1981), left [Columbia University](#) to organize the group, along with:^[5]

- [Edwin Reischauer](#), professor at [Harvard University](#) and [United States Ambassador to Japan](#), 1961–1966
- George S. Franklin, executive director of the

- [Council on Foreign Relations](#) in New York^[6]
- [Max Kohnstamm](#), [European Policy Centre](#)
- [Robert R. Bowie](#), the Foreign Policy Association and director of the [Harvard Center for International Affairs](#)
- Marshall Hornblower, former partner at [Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering](#)
- [Tadashi Yamamoto](#), [Japan Center for International Exchange](#)^[7]
- [William Scranton](#), former [governor of Pennsylvania](#)

Other founding members included [Alan Greenspan](#) and [Paul Volcker](#), both later heads of the [Federal Reserve System](#).

The records of the organization are stored at the [Rockefeller Archive Center](#) in North Tarrytown, NY.^[8]

Meetings^[edit]

The Trilateral Commission initiated its biannual meetings in October 1973 in Tokyo, Japan. In May 1976, the first plenary meeting of all of the Commission's regional groups took place in [Kyoto](#), Japan. Since the ninth meeting in 1978, plenary meetings have taken place annually. Besides annual plenary meetings, regional meetings have also taken in place by each of the Asia Pacific Group, the European Group and the North American Group.^[9] Since its founding, the discussion group has produced an official journal called *Triologue*.

Membership[[edit](#)]

Membership is divided into numbers proportionate to each of the think tank's three regional areas. The North American continent is represented by 120 members (20 Canadian, 13 Mexican and 87 U.S. citizens). The European group has reached its limit of 170 members from almost every country on the continent; the ceilings for individual countries are 20 for Germany, 18 for France, Italy and the United Kingdom, 12 for Spain and 1–6 for the rest. At first, Asia and Oceania were represented only by Japan. However, in 2000 the Japanese group of 85 members expanded itself, becoming the Pacific Asia group, composed of 117 members: 75 [Japanese](#), 11 [South Koreans](#), 7 [Australian](#) and [New Zealand](#) citizens, and 15 members from the [ASEAN](#) nations ([Indonesia](#), [Malaysia](#), [Philippines](#), [Singapore](#) and [Thailand](#)). The Pacific Asia group also included 9 members from [China](#), [Hong Kong](#) and [Taiwan](#). Currently, the Trilateral Commission claims "more than 100" Pacific Asian members.^[4]

While Trilateral Commission bylaws exclude persons holding public office from membership,^[10] the think tank draws its participants from political, business, and academic worlds. The group is chaired by three individuals, one from each of the regions represented. The current chairmen are former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs [Joseph S. Nye, Jr.](#), former head of the European Central Bank [Jean-Claude Trichet](#) and

Yasuchika Hasegawa, chair of [Takeda Pharmaceutical Company](#).^[11]

Criticisms^[edit]

Social critic and academic [Noam Chomsky](#) has criticised the commission as undemocratic, pointing to its publication [The Crisis of Democracy](#) which describes the strong popular interest in politics during the 1970s as an "excess of democracy".^[12] He spoke of it as one of the most interesting and insightful books on the topic on the modern democratic system which of course isn't really a democracy at all, but controlled by elites. Chomsky says that as it was an internal discussion they "let their hair down" and talked about how the public needs to be reduced to their proper state of apathy and obedience.^[13]

Essentially liberal internationalists from Europe, Japan and the United States, the liberal wing of the intellectual elite. That's where [Jimmy Carter](#)'s whole government came from. [...] [The Trilateral Commission] was concerned with trying to induce what they called "more moderation in democracy"—turn people back to passivity and obedience so they don't put so many constraints on state power and so on. In particular they were worried about young people. They were concerned about the institutions responsible for the indoctrination of the

young (that's their phrase), meaning schools, universities, church and so on—they're not doing their job, [the young are] not being sufficiently indoctrinated. They're too free to pursue their own initiatives and concerns and you've got to control them better. [\[14\]](#)

Conspiracy theories[\[edit\]](#)

[Conspiracy theorists](#) believe the organisation to be a central plotter of a [world government](#) or [synarchy](#). As documented by journalist [Jonathan Kay](#), Luke Rudkowski interrupted a lecture by former Trilateral Commission director [Zbigniew Brzezinski](#) in April 2007 and accused the organization and a few others of having [orchestrated the attacks of September 11](#) to initiate a new world order. [\[15\]](#)

In his 1980 book *With No Apologies*, Republican Senator [Barry Goldwater](#) suggested the discussion group was "a skillful, coordinated effort to seize control and consolidate the four centers of power: political, monetary, intellectual, and ecclesiastical... [in] the creation of a worldwide economic power superior to the political governments of the nation-states involved." [\[16\]](#) Right-wing groups such as the [John Birch Society](#) and right wing conspiracy theorists such as [Alex Jones](#) also support this idea. [\[17\]](#)

Conservative pundit [Charles Krauthammer](#)

sardonically alluded to the conspiracy theories when he was asked in 2012 who makes up the "Republican establishment", saying, "[Karl Rove](#) is the president. We meet every month on the full moon... [at] the Masonic Temple. We have the ritual: Karl brings the incense, I bring the live lamb and the long knife, and we began... with a pledge of allegiance to the Trilateral Commission."^[18]

Publications[[edit](#)]

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See also[[edit](#)]

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2. [^] [Jump up to: ^a ^b "ABOUT THE TRILATERAL COMMISSION"](#). Retrieved Jul 12, 2018.
3. [^] ["FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS"](#). The Trilateral Commission. Retrieved Jul 12, 2018.
4. [^] [Jump up to: ^a ^b "The Trilateral Commission FAQ"](#). The Trilateral Commission. 2011. Retrieved 2011-07-17.
5. [^] <http://www.rockarch.org/collections/rockorgs/trilateral.pdf> "David Rockefeller's consultations culminated with a July 23–24, 1972 meeting at Pocantico Hills, NY attended by..."
6. [^]
 - [Gerard C. Smith](#), [SALT I](#) negotiator and its first North American chairman
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Further reading[\[edit\]](#)

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External links[[edit](#)]

- [Official website](#)
- [Membership as of August 2011](#)

- [Membership as of April 2015](#)
- [Is the Trilateral Commission the secret organization that runs the world?](#) (Fact check against conspiracy theories from [The Straight Dope](#), 1987)