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## Dossiers

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# Chatham House: home to the BAC brain trust

by Scott Thompson

At 10 St. James Square, once the London home of Prime Minister William Pitt the Elder, the Earl of Chatham, the elite planners of the new British Empire gather under the banner of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA). It is said that the London *Times* often announces British foreign policy initiatives before the Foreign Office is informed. Likewise, it is at Chatham House that the mandarins of the “informal” empire gather to shape the direction of the BAC cabal, long before the issues come up for a vote in Parliament.

This is the way it has been since the RIIA was inaugurated in 1919-20, following World War I, as a Royal Chartered private intelligence agency, under the Patronage of the British Monarch. The RIIA was founded by Lionel Curtis, a leading member of the British Round Table of Lord Alfred Milner. The mission of the Round Table, known as “Milner’s Kindergarten,” was to create a new British imperium, under the guise of the “English-speaking Commonwealth,” as it had been spelled out in the Last Will and Testament of Cecil Rhodes. Rhodes had emphasized that the new English-speaking Commonwealth must include a newly subjected United States. The role of the U.S. military and industrial might in winning World War I reinforced the urgency of recolonizing the U.S.A. But this was to be a “recolonization of the mind,” rather than any kind of military occupation of America by Britain’s greatly reduced resources.

In its first decade, RIIA spawned institutes for strategic studies throughout the English-speaking world. In the United States, a collection of Wall Street-based London loyalists founded the New York Council on Foreign Relations, and, later, the Institute for Pacific Relations, as formal adjuncts to Chatham House. Ever since, the CFR has been a conduit for British geopolitical machinations into America.

Today, the RIIA is largely bankrolled through a veritable who’s who of the Club of the Isles multinational banks, raw material cartels, insurance companies, etc. Among the “Major Corporate Members,” according to RIIA’s 1997-98 annual report, are: Barclays Bank, British Aerospace, BAT (formerly British American Tobacco), British Petroleum, Cable & Wireless, Crédit Suisse First Boston, the British Ministry of Defence, Deutsche Bank, *The Economist*, the

Foreign and Commonwealth Office, HSBC (formerly the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp.), Lloyds of London, Rio Tinto, N.M. Rothschild and Sons, Shell, Standard and Chartered Bank, Unilever, and Union Bank of Switzerland.

## ‘Britain and the World’

At a 1995 Chatham House conference on “Britain and the World,” attended by several members of the royal family, a strategy was spelled out for the Commonwealth to re-emerge as the great economic and financial power center of the 21st century. “Discussion Paper 60: Economic Opportunities for Britain and the Commonwealth,” prepared by Australian academic Katherine West, called upon the London elites to make greater use of the Commonwealth nations, for British economic and political power to encompass the Far East and Asia. Calling on Britain to de-emphasize the financially exhausted European continent, West urged a policy of “mutual exploitation” between London and the far-flung capitals of the Commonwealth—beginning with Australia, a “bridgehead into Asia.” The drive to transform the Commonwealth into the core of a new British Empire, she wrote, stems from “the experience of empire and the dynamics of an informal financial empire that maintained its vibrancy long after the formal empire went into decline.” West also urged greater exploitation of what she labeled the “people’s commonwealth,” the vast array of non-governmental organizations, often operating at cross-purposes with governments and other institutions of national power in the countries where they reside.

By every indication, Katherine West’s plan is being vigorously pursued by the Chatham House elites.

Shortly after her presentation, Dr. George Joffe became Director of Studies at RIIA. Joffe’s specialty is the geopolitical exploitation of border disputes. From 1983-86, he was the Middle East editor of the Economist Intelligence Unit, another RIIA adjunct. From 1986-90, he was a consultant editor for Economist Publications, Ltd., and from 1990-96, he was Deputy Director of the Geopolitics and International Boundaries Research Center.

The Chairman of RIIA is Lord Wright of Richmond, GCMG, FRCM, a career Foreign Office mandarin, who headed the British Diplomatic Service from 1986-91. Lord Wright is on the board of directors of Barclays, Unilever, and BP, and is the Vice President of the Ditchley Foundation, a British think-tank that shapes the policies of G-10 finance ministries and central banks. He is also a director of the United World College of the Atlantic, a project launched by Armand Hammer and a favorite “charity” of both Prince Philip and Prince Charles.

Three prominent British politicians—all members of the Privy Council—are co-presidents of the RIIA: Lord Callaghan of Cardiff, Lord Carrington, and Lord Jenkins of Hillhead.