

“New World Order”

A conspiracy theory that believes an elite force is trying to implement a totalitarian world government

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT?

This document provides an overview of the **“New World Order” conspiracy theory** and is one in a series of extremism briefing notes produced by the [Institute for Strategic Dialogue](#) (ISD) out of a long-running partnership with Microsoft*. The purpose of these documents is to provide **entry-level context and background** about various extremist and conspiratorial narratives and movements. These are not intended as comprehensive deep-dives. Rather, they present key concepts, (conspiracy) theories, terminology and imagery deployed by the given movements or narratives. Further reading recommendations are provided at the end of each document, should readers want to learn more.

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CONTENT WARNING: this document contains material that may be harmful, triggering or traumatizing to some readers.

FAQ

How are these briefing notes produced?

They are informed by both literature review and digital research using **publicly accessible** websites, social media pages, channels and forums. This briefing note was published in February 2021 and is based on research conducted from December 2020 to January 2021.

What topics do they cover?

Topics span the ideological spectrum, covering prevalent extremist theories and narratives, as well as specific extremist movements. The scope ranges, with some briefing notes covering specific conspiracy theories like “The Great Replacement”, and others looking at broader, overarching issues like extreme misogyny online.

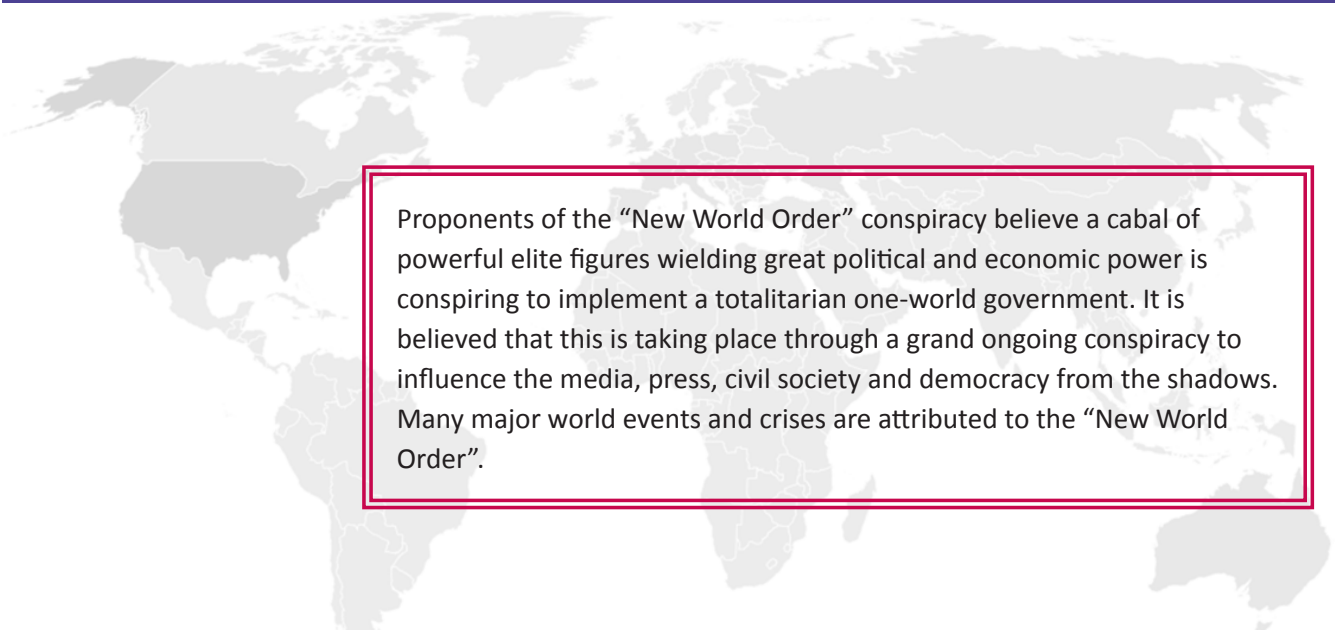
Additional questions?

Get in touch with ISD at info@isdglobal.org.



The “New World Order” Conspiracy Theory

The “New World Order” conspiracy believes that a shadowy elite force is trying to implement a global totalitarian government.



Proponents of the “New World Order” conspiracy believe a cabal of powerful elite figures wielding great political and economic power is conspiring to implement a totalitarian one-world government. It is believed that this is taking place through a grand ongoing conspiracy to influence the media, press, civil society and democracy from the shadows. Many major world events and crises are attributed to the “New World Order”.

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Background:

The “New World Order” conspiracy posits that a global elite is trying to implement a single world government. Conspiracy theorists claim this is being achieved through manufactured crises, with the COVID-19 pandemic seen as one such man-made attempt to exert undue control over civilians.

The conspiracy theory has existed long before the COVID-19 pandemic, however. Anti-Masonic, anti-Illuminati and other theories that similarly purported the existence of an elite, “shadow” establishment date back to the 1800s. The foundations of the “New World Order” conspiracy as it is known today dates to the mid-1900s, amid a rise in anti-globalist sentiment across the US. For a timeline of the phrase in recent American history, [see here](#).

How does it differ from the Illuminati?

While not synonymous, conspiracies about the “New World Order” overlap with conspiracies about the Illuminati, the group of elites who are deemed to be behind the implementation of the “New World Order”.

Conspiracies about the Illuminati date back to the 18th century – when an organization of that name existed. The Illuminate, or “Order of Illuminists” [were a secular organization from Bavaria whose aim was to free the world from religious and political authority](#). The conspiracy theory has, however, exaggerated the group’s power. The group itself was dissolved in 1787 – its legacy and prominence in contemporary conspiratorial circles and in pop culture is largely due to conspiracy theorists who refuse to believe the group no longer exists. The “New World Order”, on the other hand refers to the end goal of various shadowy elites.



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All these narratives feed into a dystopian, conspiratorial worldview that induces mistrust and fear of government and global institutions.

Tie-in with Extremism:

The theory has gained notable traction amongst right-wing extremist and militia movements. Most notably, it is often integrated with **antisemitic** tropes that claim Jewish elite, particularly banking families like the Rothschilds, are behind global crises and conflicts. In fact, some groups and movements conflate these narratives entirely by referring to the “New World Order” as the “Jew World Order”, or “JWO” for short.

Militia Movements:

Militias refer to the “New World Order” particularly in the context of their anti-state narratives. They claim, for example, that increased restrictions around gun ownership is proof that the US federal government is collaborating with this shadowy elite in order to slowly restrict the rights and individual freedoms of American citizens, particularly as this pertains to the second amendment.

Overlap with Antisemitism:

Conspiracies about the “New World Order” often incorporate antisemitic narratives, drawing on long-established tropes and claims that Jewish people control major financial and media institutions around the world. Hateful sites like the *Jew World Order* and *Real Jew News* are dedicated specifically to distributing antisemitic narratives that claim Jewish people control America and that they have infiltrated every domain of life, ranging from churches and mosques to banking institutions and governments. Broader right-wing extremist sites like *Renegade Tribune* are also riddled with such claims, speaking to the wide application of “New World Order” conspiracy theories to further antisemitism and vice versa. Holocaust denial is also prevalent on many outlets promoting “New World Order” conspiracies, with claims that the Holocaust is one of many crises that Jewish people manufactured. Other major events that are claimed to be manufactured by Jewish people include:

- Medical crises, like the COVID-19 pandemic
- Acts of terror, like the Christchurch attack
- The drug trade and “war on drugs”, explained as Jewish efforts to control supply and demand of drugs
- Global phenomena, like climate change
- Multiculturalism, where immigration is explained as a Jewish-made mechanism to “invade” Christian nations. Some sites claim mass immigration is caused by Jewish people to commit “white genocide”

Antisemitic “New World Order” conspiracy theories often use language around “elites” (e.g. “Jewish elite” or “elite Jews”) to reinforce this narrative of Jewish people controlling global agendas, with such theories overwhelmingly targeting high-profile Jewish people, such as George Soros and the Rothschild family. Conspiracists may also refer to [“the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion”](#), a text claiming to contain the minutes of meetings between Jewish leaders in the late 19th century, in which these leaders allegedly set out their plans for Jewish world domination. The text has been thoroughly and repeatedly discredited as a fabrication and a forgery, but is still referred to amongst antisemitic “New World Order” conspiracy theorists as “proof” of Jewish plans for taking over the world.

Implementation of the “New World Order”

So how do conspiracists believe this shadowy cabal is implementing the “New World Order”? While there is no definitive set of claims, believers of the conspiracy generally point to a mix of the following:

- **The United Nations (UN)** – the UN is seen as a vehicle through which this shadowy cabal operates.
- **Mind Control** – some proponents of the theory claim the cabal plans to or is already implanting microchips and other surveillance technology to enslave citizens. Antisemitic “New World Order” narratives may also refer to mainstream media outlets as part of the “Jewish propaganda arm” used to brainwash society.
- **Other Infringements on Individual Freedoms** – “New World Order” conspiracists claim increased legislation around gun ownership and the potential confiscation of privately-owned guns are all part of the wider agenda to subdue citizen populations. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent social restriction measures, as well as other public crises are similarly seen as proof of this agenda and are therefore claimed to be manufactured by this mysterious elite.
- **The Rothschilds** – the Rothschild family, a wealthy banking family of Jewish background, is particularly targeted by conspiracists. They claim, among others, that the Rothschilds control the City of London, the US Federal Reserve, much of traditional media, and more.
- **Bill Gates** and **George Soros** have similarly been accused of forming part of this shadow establishment.
- **“Secret Societies”** – the Bilderberg Group, a selection of North American and European politicians that come together once a year, are also fodder for conspiracy. The secretive nature of their meetings, of which no minutes or other follow-ups are ever publicized, has spurred claims that the group is part of this global elite attempting to implement a one-world government. The Council of Foreign Relations and Trilateral Commission are also perceived similarly by conspiracists, in that they are accused of being vehicles for implementing the “New World Order”.

Good to Know:

The picture on the right is the reverse side of the Great Seal of America, which was originally used to authenticate official documents in the late 1700s. Now also seen on one-dollar bills, conspiracists point to this and the accompanying Latin inscription, which translates as “a new order of the ages”, as proof of the long-standing existence of and long-term efforts by elite forces to dominate society and implement a “New World Order”.





FURTHER READING

- [A Culture of Conspiracy](#) - by Michael Barkun
Explores the history and trajectory of prominent conspiracy theories in the US
- [A dialogue-driven approach to address the partisan dynamics of online misinformation](#) - by Emilie de Keulenaar at the Security and Human Rights Monitor
Makes a data-based digital analysis of the “New World Order” conspiracy
- [A Global Government is Waiting in the Wings](#) - by Hua Hsu
Presents a timeline of the “New World Order” conspiracy
- [Anti-Soros Conspiracies](#) - by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD)
Alludes to the interplay between hateful narratives targeting philanthropist George Soros and the “New World Order” conspiracy
- [The Christian Identity Movement](#) - by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL)
A resource that summarizes the history and ideology of the Christian Identity Movement, which has been known to promote the “New World Order” theory
- [History’s Greatest Conspiracy Theories](#) - by the Telegraph
Summarizes historical and existing conspiracy theories, including the “New World Order”

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