

[« Republicans Aren't Reality Based. | Main](#)**Yes, Virginia, There Is a Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy.**

Today's *New York Times* has an interesting [story](#) about a periodic meeting conservative uber-donor **David Koch** organizes, where he and other masters of the universe plan how to advance the cause of "freedom," i.e. remove themselves from the burden of paying taxes and obeying regulations on things like the environment and worker safety:

A secretive network of Republican donors is heading to the Palm Springs area for a long weekend in January, but it will not be to relax after a hard-fought election — it will be to plan for the next one.

Koch Industries, the longtime underwriter of libertarian causes from the Cato Institute in Washington to the ballot initiative that would suspend California's landmark law capping greenhouse gases, is planning a confidential meeting at the Rancho Las Palmas Resort and Spa to, as an invitation says, "develop strategies to counter the most severe threats facing our free society and outline a vision of how we can foster a renewal of American free enterprise and prosperity."

The invitation, sent to potential new participants, offers a rare peek at the Koch network of the ultrawealthy and the politically well-connected, its far-reaching agenda to enlist ordinary Americans to its cause, and its desire for the utmost secrecy.

Getting this kind of "rare peek" is always interesting, but there isn't anything particularly sinister about the fact that these people get together to plot strategy. People on the left do it too; for instance, there's a group called the Democracy Alliance, which is a collection of progressive donors. They too occasionally gather in one place, to determine how to best spend their money to advance the causes they believe in. **George Soros**, the right's *bete noir*, is even one of the Alliance's members.

But imagine if it were discovered that among the participants at the Democracy Alliance meetings were **Ruth Bader Ginsburg** and **Stephen Breyer** -- that two sitting Supreme Court justices were getting together with top liberal donors to plot political strategy. To say there would be outrage would be an understatement. Forget about all the fulminating about "activist judges" on Fox News and conservative talk radio that would ensue. Republicans would almost certainly propose impeaching the two justices, arguing, with some justification, that it is grossly improper for members of the Supreme Court to be participating in such plainly political activities.

Keep that in mind as you read this, from lower down in the Times article:

To encourage new participants, Mr. Koch offers to waive the \$1,500 registration fee. And he notes that **previous guests have included Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas of the Supreme Court, Gov. Haley Barbour and Gov. Bobby Jindal, Senators Jim DeMint and Tom Coburn, and Representatives Mike Pence, Tom Price and Paul D. Ryan.**

Yes, that's right: Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas have attended strategy meetings with the billionaires who fund pretty much every major conservative interest group in the country. I wonder what they talked about?

-- Paul Waldman

Posted by Paul Waldman on October 20, 2010 10:40 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Share](#)

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