

25 February 1959

Memorandum from Joseph E. Johnson

Subject: September Bilderberg Conference

1. At the January Steering Committee meeting in Bilderberg, the dates for a conference were set tentatively as 18-20 September. No definite decision was reached on whether the conference should be held and no consideration was given to a possible agenda; nor was there any discussion of the location.

2. In the conversation yesterday in my office, Retinger told me that Prince Bernhard has now definitely received authorization in writing from the Dutch Government to hold such a meeting in Turkey. He received that authorization prior to the January meeting but felt it would be unwise to push the question at that time, preferring to hold it off till the March meeting.

The Turks, who are prepared to have the conference itself underwritten from Turkish sources, have proposed that it be held on Prinkipo in the Sea of Marmora, and Retinger spoke in terms of about 60 participants.

Retinger said that two proposals, and only two, have so far been made as to possible agenda topics:

1. The problem of China
2. How to reshape the pattern of Western international organization, both official and unofficial, for more effective operation.

Retinger and I did not discuss the first suggestion and I made no suggestions for other topics. I did raise questions as to the second proposal, reminding Retinger that we had discussed this topic in some detail at Fiuggi, with a paper by Lincoln Gordon, and raising the question as to whether it wasn't a pretty well worked over topic and also somewhat sterile.

3. I told Retinger that the American Group had not discussed at all the question of the September meeting, adding that I personally did not know whether we would be able to find the funds necessary for full American participation. I pointed out in that connection that we would have to have more funds because we

would have to pay the transportation from Western Europe to Istanbul of a good many people who are able to take care of their own travel cost to Europe but have difficulty in doing so beyond there. I said that we would have a meeting before long to consider various aspects of the question so that we could have a position at the time of the next Steering Committee meeting.