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*The following review appeared in the July 2010 issue of CHOICE:*

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Wedel, Janine R. **Shadow elite: how the world's new power brokers undermine democracy, government, and the free market.** Basic Books, 2009. 283p index afp ISBN 9780465091065, \$27.50

Wedel (George Mason Univ.) presents an arresting theory of power that deserves wide attention. She contends that groups of immensely influential individuals have emerged, and their personal contacts and private networks control policy agendas and influence policy outcomes to an unrealized extent. Examples are Barry McCaffrey, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, Steven Kelman, Larry Summers, and Dick Cheney. These men operate variously as academics, advisers, consultants, envoys, members of think tanks, television pundits, and--when circumstances permit--government officials. They use their positions to press for causes, such as privatizing former communist governments, outsourcing the US government, and going to war in Iraq. The result is not corruption in the old sense but an insidious form of influence that operates behind the scenes and via stage-managed media performances that give the public the "truth." This reviewer's only reservations are that the author's analysis assumes the manipulators are always pursuing the same ends and that the shadow-elite phenomenon may be largely restricted to the spheres of power surrounding world capitals and not necessarily endemic to public policy making in general. Although Wedel's specialized terminology is sometimes distracting, as a thinker she is in the same league with John Kenneth Galbraith and Charles Lindblom. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above.  
-- C. T. Goodsell, *emeritus, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*