

How to buy friends and influence

Among the many interesting points in Bob Woodward's book *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA*, are claims that a number of heads of state regularly accepted payoffs from the U.S. government.

These charges are, so far as I know, correct though most people are unaware of just how common it is to *dakstheesh* foreign rulers.

Woodward cites the following as recipients of personal payments from the CIA: Jordan's King Hussein, Morocco's King Hassan, El Salvador's President Jose Napoleon Duarte, Lebanon's President Amin Gemayel, and Sudan's former strongman, Jaffar el-Nimieri. Hussein has received CIA cash for over 25 years. He and the others cited by Woodward used their stipends to buy loyalty of key tribal and army leaders, for personal expenses and for secret intelligence operations.

Less well known is the fact that Egypt's late leader Anwar Sadat had been on the CIA payroll since the mid-1950s. He was a regular source of information on the inner workings of Nasser's government.

After Nasser's death, CIA support for Sadat proved decisive in helping him seize power. Once there, it seemed to many Egyptians that Sadat's loyalties were more with his American patrons than with Egypt.

No one should be surprised by such goings-on. Buying heads of state has been a time-honored and highly effective practice since the Bronze Age. Little kings were bought by big kings who were, in turn, bought by emperors. During the days of Britain's Indian Raj, stipends paid to assorted nabobs and maharajas were the glue that held India together.

U.S. payoffs to Mideastern heads of states differ little from what the British did in imperial India. The CIA is by no means the only dispenser of lar-



The French are past masters at the subtle art of *dakstheesh*. Many heads of state in French-speaking West Africa get their monthly Vuitton bags from Paris, filled with crisp, new dollars and francs. Chad's tribesmen, now happily fighting the Libyans, are also paid by the French. Money, as Malcolm Muggeridge so rightly observed, is the homogenized form of power.

Votes in the UN and diplomatic recognition can also be bought. Central American and some West Indian nations have been particularly prone to selling their services to well-heeled parties. The U.S. has often purchased votes on UN resolutions with a few judicious payments. Money passed to leaders of Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic caused these countries to vote for the creation of the state of Israel. Personal payments to UN ambassadors to secure their favorable votes on economic or political matters has also been known to occur with some frequency.

It's even more common for heads of state to accept payments from foreign companies or from other nations for business deals. Zaire's President Mobutu, one of the world's richest men, is notorious for taking a large cut of any major commercial venture in his impoverished nation. In many other parts of black Africa, paying off

the president is step one in any deal. The same holds true in parts of Latin America and Southeast Asia. In India and Pakistan, business payoffs to state or provincial governors are a matter of course. Politics is still considered in many countries the road to riches.

Unfortunately for many foreign leaders who have been receiving stipends, Washington clearly can't seem to keep any of its secrets. It now seems inevitable that word of such payola will eventually leak out. When this happens, both the payer and the payee are tainted.

With King Hussein's long record of taking money from the CIA, how many of his people will believe he is capable of making a peace treaty with Israel that is in Jordan's interest? Claims by his opponents that he is a "CIA hireling" and U.S. agent will receive a lot more credence.

Or, take the case of El Salvador's Duarte. He has been supported by the U.S. for years. Now his opponents on the left and right cite such support as proof that Duarte's loyalty is to Washington and dismiss him as a foreign agent.

Even Italy has not escaped this problem. Many Italians have known for decades that CIA money has found its way to the ruling Christian Democrats and to the smaller Republican party. Most Italians consider this natural. After all, they say, who doubts that Moscow helps to fund Italy's powerful Communist party?

True enough, but the Soviets are always short of hard currency so their largesse is usually far more limited and grudging than that of their capitalist competitors. As for lily-white Canada, can anyone doubt that much of the money we lavish on our adopted African welfare cases finds its way into the deep, welcoming pockets of their smiling presidents?