

Secret, under-the-table CIA payments amounting to "tens of millions"—far more than any sums paid to Jordan's King Hussein—have been regularly funneled to Israel's intelligence service for control and disbursement by the Prime Minister's office.

What is important about these payments, which started around 1960, is not their secrecy or even their existence. It is their purpose: to give the anti-Communist West, through the highly effective good offices of Israel, competitive equality in political penetration of newly independent states in black Africa.

"Secret payments to a foreign government," one intelligence source told us, "are and always will be one of the principal occupations of a good intelligence service, whether it is the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) or the French Deuxieme Bureau or the British MI-6."

That such an obvious fact would need such a precise explanation is due to the uproar in President Carter's White House that greeted The Washington Post's revelation of the CIA's payments to King Hussein. As reported by The Post's Bob Woodward, Jimmy Carter's reaction was "distress" and he immediately ordered the payments terminated.

What makes that "distress" somewhat surprising is the fact that Cyrus Vance, Carter's Secretary of State, is the only present top official fully aware of the history of these CIA subsidies to Hussein. He approved them as deputy secretary of defense late in the Johnson administration, when he sat on the powerful "303 committee"—so named because it met in the elegant No. 303 corner office of the Executive Office Building, occupied by Gen. Maxwell Taylor.

The "303 committee" (renamed the "40 committee" in the Nixon years) was composed of the political under secretary of state, the deputy secretary of defense (then Vance), the CIA director, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the President's national security adviser. This committee controlled all covert CIA operations.

Accordingly, when Carter—in "distress"—ordered immediate cancellation of the Hussein payments, he was killing a program that Vance had approved repeatedly during his 1964-1967 term as deputy defense secretary and that had had a profound and stabilizing impact on Jordan.

But Carter has said nothing about the far larger Israeli subsidies—perhaps because he does not know, perhaps because he decided that Israeli operations in black Africa (though not remotely so

successful today as before the 1967 Arab-Israeli war) are still worth money. If so, Carter will have to square that with his decision on Hussein.

The huge Israeli subsidies had equal justification with the payments to the King of Jordan. They were designed to finance Israeli "penetration" of the politics, culture, economics and military organizations of black African states rapidly moving out of colonialism into independence.

Against this undercover U.S.—Israeli operation was arrayed the power of the Soviet empire, as well as the tenacious but smaller efforts of the Chinese Communists. So intimately connected with the CIA was the Israeli campaign to woo black Africa that at one point the Israeli army proposed a "joint" military advisory group in Ethiopia; this was rejected by Washington, which wanted a low profile.

Anti-Israeli sentiment began rising in black Africa soon after Israel seized the Egyptian Sinai, the Syrian Golan Heights and the Palestinian West Bank in 1967. It boiled over after the Yom Kippur war of October 1974. Long before then, however, Israeli activities in black Africa had fulfilled expectations as a counterweight to Soviet-Chinese penetration. Black Africans were taught special Israeli talents, such as frontier fighting and farming skills, developed in Israeli kibbutzim.

One of the best dividends from this CIA investment came in Zaire (the former Belgian Congo). President Mobutu of Zaire, leader of moderate forces in the Congo's civil war against Communist-backed radicals, might never have emerged the victor without Israel's help.

Judging from his Hussein performance, Carter may now be asking Vance why such hidden CIA assistance to Israel was ever permitted. He might also ask a more pragmatic question: Considering that Congress unquestionably would have voted money for Israel publicly had it been asked, why was the hidden money necessary?

The questions answer themselves: A public request for such funds would have exposed Israel as a proxy missionary for the United States, frightened black Africa into refusing cooperation for fear of political backlash and sharpened one of Moscow's propaganda pictures of an imperialistic Uncle Sam with Israel as his tool.

To be consistent, Carter should terminate CIA aid to Israel, as he did so publicly with Hussein. But such consistency would mean a foreign policy conducted by the new President with only passing relevance to the outside world.

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The CIA's Secret Subsidy
To Israel
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