

Hussein payoffs among CIA's

New York News

WASHINGTON — Present and former high Central Intelligence Agency officials contended yesterday that payoffs of millions of dollars to Jordan's King Hussein resulted in one of the most successful operations in the 30-year history of the agency.

But they said that since the payoffs — up to \$2 million a year to Hussein over the past 20 years — were disclosed and the program stopped, the king's future in the volatile Mideast has become shaky. They added that the value of the program, which provided "high grade" intelligence from the tinderbox area, has been all but nullified.

Hussein originally was given money directly in 1957 on orders from CIA Director Allen Dulles "to provide some stability in the Mideast," one official said. "We got as much for our dollars from Hussein as from anything we did in the Mideast."

Hussein took moderate stances during frequent Arab-Israeli disputes, allowed the CIA to set up radio transmitters and listening posts in Jordan and booted out the terrorist-oriented Palestinian Liberation Organization in 1970.

CIA analysts were less enthusiastic about the results of other payoff programs, although they contended that none broke any U.S. laws.

Payments to the late Nationalist Chinese President Chiang Kai-shek did nothing to free the mainland from the Communists during the Cold War period of the 1950s when Chiang was threatening to invade. Instead, there is ample evidence that U.S. dollars succeeded

only in corrupting the Chiang government on Taiwan.

The CIA also poured money into former South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu's pockets, making Thieu a millionaire but not preventing the takeover of South Vietnam by the Communists.

Other recipients of direct CIA payments, mainly in the 1950s and 1960s, were Cypriot President Archbishop Makarios, former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt, the Dalai Lama of Tibet and two African leaders: Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire.

A former high CIA official objected to newspaper

San Francisco

most successful operations

accounts describing the payments as "bribes." He said: "They were payments for services rendered, and there was nothing wrong with it. The programs had the enthusiastic support of high authority."

It could not be determined whether any chief executive other than President Ford knew details of any of the payments to foreign leaders. But another former CIA official said the high-level "Forty Committee," at one time headed by then-Secretary of State Kissinger, did give continuing approval to the Hussein program. The official said President Johnson's national security affairs adviser, Walt Rostow, also gave the impression in committee meetings that he discussed

Hussein with Johnson.

The White House and the CIA have refused to comment on the payoffs. The matter is particularly delicate because Secretary of State Vance is in the Mideast on a diplomatic mission. Vance has refused comment. Jordanian officials have called accounts of the payments "a combination of fabrication and distortion."

The White House said Friday it is reviewing foreign intelligence operations, catching some CIA officials by surprise. They said there had been no previous mention of the study.