

CIA's Overseas Remittance Men

SOME OF THE REVELATIONS of the past few days about CIA payments to the heads of foreign states are erroneous, said the President in his press conference yesterday. And some have substance. His observations on this embarrassing expose were cautious and otherwise unrevealing.

So once again the American people are confronted with new episodes of the CIA's *realpolitik* (though probably the Germans, who invented that term, would call this particular form of CIA activity *Geltpolitik*.) Certainly the CIA is gaining no points in public esteem by the disclosures of the Washington Post's Watergate reporter, Bob Woodward.

AND YET THERE MUST be something to say for a policy of financially supporting King Hussein of Jordan in our own international political interest. Since Woodward's report of this has not been denied, indeed cannot be denied, we proceed to ask ourselves what the United States got for its money, \$750,000 last year alone.

Woodward reports that the justification for 20 years of secret annual payments, distributed to Hussein, he says, by the CIA station chief in Amman, was the king's toleration of U. S. intelligence operations in the country. Another justification may be inferred from the fact that Jordan, lying alongside Israel, is no longer the host and home to the Palestinian liberation activists. If getting rid of them was Hussein's quid for our quo, who is disposed to complain about the bargain?

OF COURSE, the Intelligence Oversight Board, which called them improper in its report to President Ford, would have cut the payments off, and now Mr. Carter, alerted, has done so. But a sudden access of virtue after 20 years of secret complicity does not answer the question, how does an upstanding, democratic nation hand out payments for the beneficent behavior of foreign potentates save by secrecy through the CIA?

It seems not too cynical to suggest that funds handed out to King Hussein were not very different, in terms of what they were meant to procure, than those Marshall Plan funds of 30 years ago which in some cases went to purchase, not steel and cement, but desirable political behavior.

WE ARE BOUND TO SAY that the denials of taking CIA money which have come from some other foreign leaders, particularly Venezuela's president, carry weight with us, and we would have to see the evidence before we would believe of Venezuela what is easy to believe of, for instance, South Korea.