



# Those CIA Bribes

Andrew Tully

**T**HE HYSTERICAL FLAP over reports that the CIA paid Jordan's King Hussein millions of dollars in secret annual installments recalled an interview in the New Republic last year with former CIA director William Colby.

It was not really an interview, but a prosecution. The prosecutor was Oriana Fallaci, a female Italian journalist who had attained a certain notoriety as an emotional showoff.

Oriana was furious that the CIA had bribed certain Italian politicians who qualified as anti-Communist. Colby refused to reveal the names of the beneficiaries, but he submitted the rational viewpoint on l'affaire Hussein:

"We give money to help somebody to do what he wants for his country and cannot do because he hasn't enough money."

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**T**HAT'S WHAT the payments to Hussein were all about, and they were made, all right — to a total tune of \$10-million. And that's one reason Hussein has been the most moderate of Arab leaders. The money gave him the financial wherewithal to keep at bay the numerous Idi Amins who have always lurked about in Jordan and neighboring Arab states seeking to give Hussein's subjects the treatment Amin gavs Uganda.

Asked at his last news conference if it had been proper for the CIA to bribe Hussein, President Carter refused to comment "directly on any specific CIA activity." That was smart, and proper. President Carter is a wiser man than Carter the presidential candidate, who

used to say he'd tell us all about what the CIA was up to.

He has learned also that forcing the CIA to divulge the nature of all its activities would make an intelligent and sophisticated foreign policy impossible.

"This is a very serious problem," Mr. Carter said, "of how in a democracy to have adequate intelligence gathered, assessed and used to guarantee the security of our country." Good enough. Harry Truman said it better: "We're not going to tell our enemies the way our spies operate."

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**M**EANWHILE, it is reassuring to learn that Mr. Carter is concerned about how many people in government should have access to intelligence secrets. He told congressional leaders that he had reduced the number of White House officials with such access from 40 to 5. The former champion of an open-door CIA also told the legislators that too many members of Congress are in on those secrets — members of seven committees now get CIA briefings.

That's too many Capitol Hill types by far. I do not indict Congress as a whole, but on any committee there is always at least one member whose mouth is a virtual perpetual motion machine. Tell a guy like that a secret and he can't wait to leak it so he can feel important.

As for the U.S. practice of secretly bribing our foreign pals, there is no way it can be safely discontinued in certain cases. That is to say, bribery should be employed when the President decides a given situation warrants it.