

Ex-President for Sale

by Alan M. Dershowitz

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It now turns out that Jimmy Carter—who is accusing the Jews of buying the silence of the media and politicians regarding criticism of Israel—has been bought and paid for by Arab money. In his recent book tour to promote *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, Carter has been peddling a particularly nasty bit of bigotry. The canard is that Jews own and control the media, and prevent newspapers and the broadcast media from presenting an objective assessment of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that Jews have bought and paid for every single member of Congress so as to prevent any of them from espousing a balanced position. How else can anyone understand Carter's claims that it is impossible for the media and politicians to speak freely about Israel and the Middle East? The only explanation—and one that Carter tap dances around, but won't come out and say directly—is that Jews control the media and buy politicians. Carter then presents himself as the sole heroic figure in American public life who is free of financial constraints to discuss Palestinian suffering at the hands of the Israelis.

Listen carefully to what Carter says about the media: the plight of the Palestinians is “not something that has been acknowledged or even discussed in this country... You never hear anything about what is happening to the Palestinians by the Israelis.” He claims to have personally “witnessed and experienced the severe restraints on any free and balanced discussion of the facts.” He implies that the Jews impose these “severe restraints.” He then goes on to say that the only reason his book—which has been universally savaged by reviewers—is receiving such negative reviews is because they are all being written by “representatives of Jewish organizations” (demonstrably false!). So much for the media.

Now here is what he says about politicians:

“It would be almost politically suicidal for members of Congress to espouse a balanced position between Israel and Palestine, to suggest that Israel comply with international law or to speak in defense of justice or human rights for Palestinians. Very few would ever deign to visit the Palestinian cities of Ramallah, Nablus, Hebron, Gaza City or even Bethlehem and talk to the beleaguered residents.”

Each of these claims is demonstrably false. The plight of the Palestinians has been covered more extensively, per capita, than the plight of any other group in the world, certainly more than the Tibetans and the victims of genocides in Darfur and Rwanda. Moreover, Carter totally ignores the impact of Arab oil money and the influence of the Saudi lobby. In numerous instances where the Arab lobbies have been pitted against the Israeli lobby, the former has prevailed.

Even beyond these nasty canards, the big story that the media and political figures in America have missed is how grievously they, themselves have been insulted and

disrespected by our self-righteous former president. Carter is lecturing *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *the Los Angeles Times*, CNN, and the major networks about how they are incapable of reporting the news objectively because they are beholden to some Jewish cabal. He is telling Pulitzer Prize winning writers such as Tom Friedman and Samatha Power that they did not deserve their prizes. He is telling George Will that his reporting is controlled by his Jewish bosses (sound a little bit like Judith Regan?). And he is denying that Anderson Cooper is capable of filing an honest report from the West Bank.

As far as our legislators are concerned, he is accusing Barack Obama, John McCain, Hillary Clinton, and Patrick Leahy of being bought and paid for by the Israeli lobby. On Planet Carter, even congressmen with no Jewish constituents would be committing political suicide by taking a balanced position on the Middle East. What an outrageous insult to some of the best journalists and most independent political figures in the world.

At the bottom, Carter is saying that no objective journalist or politician could actually believe that America's support for Israel is based on moral and strategic considerations and not on their own financial self-interest. Such a charge is so insulting to every honest legislator and journalist in this country that I am amazed that Carter has been let off the hook so easily. Only the self-righteous Jimmy Carter is capable of telling the truth, because only he is free of financial pressures that might influence his positions.

It now turns out that the shoe is precisely on the other foot. Recent disclosures prove that it is Carter who has been bought and paid for by anti-Israel Arab and Islamic money.



Carter accepted a \$500,000 gift from Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan, president of the United Arab Emirates, whose Zayed Center promoted anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial.

Journalist Jacob Laskin has documented the tens of millions of dollars that the Carter Center has accepted from Saudi Arabian royalty and assorted other Middle Eastern sultans, who, in return, Carter dutifully praised as peaceful and tolerant (no matter how despotic the regime). And these are only the confirmed, public donations.

Carter has also accepted half a million dollars and an award from Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan, saying in 2001: "This award has special significance for me because it is named for my personal friend, Sheik Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan." This is the same Zayed, the long-time ruler of the United Arab Emirates, whose \$2.5 million gift

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to the Harvard Divinity School was returned in 2004 due to Zayed's rampant Jew-hatred. Zayed's personal foundation, the Zayed Center, claims that it was Zionists, rather than Nazis, who "were the people who killed the Jews in Europe" during the Holocaust. It has held lectures on the blood libel and conspiracy theories about Jews and America perpetrating Sept. 11.

Another journalist, Rachel Ehrenfeld, in a thorough and devastating article on "Carter's Arab Financiers" meticulously catalogues Carter's ties to Arab money men, from a Saudi bailout of his peanut farm in 1976, to funding for Carter's presidential library, to continued support for all manner of Carter's post-presidential activities. For instance, it was the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), founded in Pakistan and fronted by a Saudi billionaire, Gaith Pharaon, that helped Carter start up his beloved Carter Center. According to Ehrenfeld:

"BCCI's origins were primarily ideological. [Agha Hasan] Abedi wanted the bank to reflect the supra-national Muslim credo and 'the best bridge to help the world of Islam, and the best way to fight the evil influence of the Zionists.'

As Ehrenfeld concluded:

"[I]t seems that AIPAC's real fault was its failure to outdo the Saudi's purchases of the former president's loyalty. There has not been any nation in the world that has been more cooperative than Saudi Arabia," *The New York Times* quoted Mr. Carter June 1977, thus making the Saudis a major factor in U. S. foreign policy.

Evidently, the millions in Arab petrodollars feeding Mr. Carter's global endeavors, often in conflict with U.S. government policies, also ensure his loyalty.

It is particularly disturbing that a former president who has accepted dirty blood-money from dictators, anti-Semites, Holocaust deniers, and supporters of terrorism should try to deflect attention from his own conflicts of interest by raising the oldest canard in the sordid history of anti-Semitism: namely, that Jews have dual loyalty and use their money improperly to influence the country they live in, in favor of the country to which they owe their real allegiance. Abraham Foxman responded to Carter's canard as follows:

As disturbing as Carter's simplistic approach is, however, even more disturbing is his picking up on the Mearsheimer -Walt theme of Jewish control of American policy, though in much more abbreviated form and not being the focus of his work. Referring to U.S. policy and the "condoning" of Israel's actions, Carter says: "There are constant and vehement political and media debates in Israel concerning its policies in the West Bank but because of powerful political, economic, and religious forces in the U.S., Israeli government decisions are rarely questioned or condemned, voices from Jerusalem dominate our media, and most American citizens are unaware of circumstances in the occupied territories." In other words, the old canard and conspiracy theory of Jewish control of the media, Congress, and the U.S. government is rearing its ugly head in the person of a former President.

As noted above, the most perverse aspect of Carter's foray into bigotry is that as he pours this old wine into new bottles he is himself awash in Arab money. When a politician levels these kinds of cynical accusations against others, it would seem incumbent on him to show that his own hands are clean and his own pockets empty.

Accordingly I now call upon Carter to make full public disclosure of all of his and the Carter Center's ties to Arab money. If he fails to do so, I challenge the media to probe deeply into his, his family's, and his Center's Arab ties so that the public can see precisely the sources and amounts of money he has received and judge whether it has corrupted the process of objective reportage and politics by Carter and others who have received such funds. Finally, I ask the appropriate government agencies to conduct an investigation into whether Carter should be required to register as a lobbyist for foreign interests.

Let's stop invoking discredited ethnic stereotypes, look at the hard facts, and actually see who's being bought and sold.

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