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CIA-Financed 'Friends' Friendly Only to Arabs

By HILTON FRIEDMAN Chronicle—JTA Correspondent

WASHINGTON—Congress wants to know why the Executive Department subsidizes Arab "student" propagandists when Egyptian President Nasser has served notice that his country would not pay debts to the United States.

In a recent anti-American speech in Cairo, Nasser condemned alleged "pressures" by the United States. He made clear that \$150 million in debts would not be paid.

Mr. Friedman

This assertion came at a time when the State Department said it was studying new applications for aid by Egypt.

Nasser's remarks also coincided with the disclosure in Washington that the Central Intelligence Agency, acting under the direction and authority of the White House and the National Security Council, had financed the so-called "American Friends of the Middle East." The "Friends" were friendly only to the Arabs. They conducted the most potent anti-Israel front in the United States.

While the State Department has previously denied it, CIA funds for several years were channeled to the AFME treasury through various conduits. Most of this money was used to finance AFME's aid to Arab students who attend over 100 American colleges and universities.

The AFME student program is endorsed by the Arab League and used for a coordinated propaganda campaign on the campuses of American colleges from coast to coast.

Although the Arab students are subsidized by American taxpayers, their main drive is not directed at Communism but at Zionism. Many support the Viet Cong and condemn the American role in Viet Nam. Their favorite and most frequent reference to Communism is a threat that unless the United States stops aiding Israel, the Arabs will go Communist.

Exploiting the right of free speech, Arab students have frequently voiced anti-Jewish prejudice. A few were identified among sponsors of campus invitations to the neo-Nazi speaker, George Rockwell.

The CIA apparently rationalized its underwriting of such students by hoping, through ex-

posure to American democracy, to win them away from the extremist and pro-Communist tendencies of the Arab world. Perhaps it was viewed as good for Israel, in the long run. That would coincide with the thinking of the State Department's Near Eastern division.

In any event, hundreds of loud-mouthed bigots were imported at the expense of the American people—without the public's knowledge or consent. Some of the "students" are trained propagandists in their 30's and 40's rather than naive youths seeking knowledge and truth.

Members of Congress have indicated that it was a waste of public funds to finance the Arab League propaganda apparatus in the United States. A number of Congressmen have demanded a review of this and other undertakings recently exposed.

In preserving the interests of a free people, as their agents, the CIA may have to engage in legitimate counter-espionage. Millions of Americans, however, cannot understand how the national security interests of the United States are served by subsidizing hundreds of anti-Israel agitators.