

# DOES RAY HUNT DO THIS KIND OF FUND-RAISING, TOO?

Via TP, the Sunday Times (of London) has an explosive video, showing Bush crony Stephen Payne effectively selling State Department endorsements for former Central Asian Presidents in exchange for six figure donations to the Bush Library.

A lobbyist with close ties to the White House is offering access to key figures in George W Bush's administration in return for six-figure donations to the private library being set up to commemorate Bush's presidency.

Stephen Payne, who claims to have raised more than \$1m for the president's Republican party in recent years, said he would arrange meetings with Dick Cheney, the vice-president, Condoleezza Rice, the secretary of state, and other senior officials in return for a payment of \$250,000 (£126,000) towards the library in Texas.

[snip]

Asked by an undercover reporter who the politician would be able to meet for that price, Payne said: "Cheney's possible, definitely the national security adviser [Stephen Hadley], definitely either Dr Rice or . . . I think a meeting with Dr Rice or the deputy secretary [John Negroponte] is possible . . .

"The main thing is that he [the Asian politician] comes, and he's well received, that he meets with high-level people . . . and we send positive statements made back from the administration about 'This guy wasn't

such a bad guy, many people have done worse'."

As Kagro X notes, there's a name for this: it's called B-R-I-B-E-R-Y.

Now perhaps this is not common practice for those raising funds for Bush's Library. And perhaps it's not common practice for those appointed to national security advisory committees like the Homeland Security Advisory Committee (on which Payne serves) or the Presidential Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. But I can't help but note the similar profile between Payne—who is apparently selling influence—and Ray Hunt. Of course, Hunt isn't dealing lobbying contracts with dubious foreign figures. Rather, he's making oil deals. And for some reason, the State Department not only overlooked the fact that Hunt's premature deal with Kurdistan might destabilize Iraq, but they pointed Hunt Oil to new business elsewhere in Iraq.

Gosh. The State Department sure does like Bush's cronies who come up with big chunks of cash for Bush's library, doesn't it?