



How to sell anti-semites: The Legitimization of Dubai

Dick Morris and Eileen McGann

Colaboraciones n° 1600

March 30, 2007

The past few years have seen a concerted international PR campaign to promote Dubai as a tolerant new Mecca of Middle East moderation and amazing economic growth.

And it's working. Corporate giant Halliburton is moving its headquarters there; the famed Louvre is opening a branch in the emirate. Tourists are flocking to Dubai's luxury hotels.

But don't be fooled. Dubai, which is one of the seven princedoms of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), is anything but tolerant and progressive.

To put it bluntly: They don't like Jews.

In fact, Dubai, like the rest of the UAE, is blatantly anti-Semitic. It bars all Israeli citizens from ever setting foot in the country. People from other nations whose passport

have stamps indicating they've even visited Israel must notify Dubai immigration authorities of the stamp before entering.

Dubai is also actively involved in the Arab boycott of Israel: It bans all products made in Israel and even ones with parts made in Israel.

But the emir of Dubai, Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, understands the value of using prominent Americans to legitimize his country and burnish its image in the American media.

That's why former Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton have been the objects of Dubai largesse. Their Dubai friends have given millions to each of their presidential libraries. And Bill Clinton has raked in more than \$1 million for speeches he's given in Dubai and the UAE.

Dubai's PR machine went into high gear after 9/11 - in part to distract attention from the extensive use the terrorists made of the emirate. More than half of the hijackers traveled to the United States via Dubai. The 9/11 Commission noted that \$234,500 of the \$300,000 wired to the hijackers and plot leaders in America came via Dubai banks.

Several months after 9/11, Dubai's newest best friend began his public association with the country. In January 2002, Bill Clinton gave his first Dubai speech (for \$300,000). He's been legitimizing the country ever since.

Clinton was the rainmaker who introduced the emir to his friend and employer, Ron Berkle, the owner of Yucaipa companies and a major fund-raiser for Bill and Hillary.

Last year, Yucaipa and the emir formed a new company, DIGL, for their joint ventures. So Bill Clinton is now an adviser and member of the board of directors of a company that is in partnership with the anti-Israeli government of Dubai.

The Clintons won't reveal how much the former president pocketed for setting up this deal, except to report on Hillary's Senate disclosure form: "more than \$1,000."

A lot more. According to San Francisco Examiner columnist P.J. Corkery, Clinton makes \$10 million a year from Yucaipa.

Bill isn't alone in legitimizing Dubai. Other Clinton pals - including disgraced former National Security Adviser Sandy Berger, ex-Secretary of State Madeline Albright and Al and Tipper Gore - have attended highly publicized events there.

So have some Republicans - including former Bush Sr. Chief of Staff John Sununu, presidential brother Neal Bush and Rudy Guiliani.

Republican ex-Sen. Bob Dole and Democratic ex-Rep. Tom Downey lobby for Dubai; so does The Glover Park Group, home of Hillary Clinton spokesman Howard Wolfson and former President Clinton press secretary Joe Lockhart.

Major U.S. business leaders populate the many conferences sponsored by Dubai and its industries.

All of this helps legitimize Dubai. And no one mentions the problem with Israel.

Bill Clinton even created a Dubai Scholars Program at the American University in Dubai under the sponsorship of the William Jefferson Clinton Foundation. Laura Tyson, Clinton's chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, created a similar Dubai study program at the University of London.

But not everyone is blind.

Last month, the University of Connecticut correctly abandoned plans to open up a campus in Dubai after serious complaints about Dubai's

state-imposed discrimination of people based on their national origin and religion and its documented violations of human rights. (For example, Human Rights Watch has said Dubai abuses tens of thousands of migrant workers from India and Pakistan.)

The Clinton Foundation certainly wouldn't sponsor a program in America that banned Israeli students. It shouldn't sponsor one in Dubai, either.

It's time to stop legitimizing an anti-Semitic state.