

HALLIBURTON TRIES TO GET HALF OFF ITS BRIBE FOR CHENEY'S FREEDOM

As I noted last week, Halliburton is in negotiations to reach a plea deal with Nigeria to drop its bribery charges against Dick Cheney. At that point, Nigeria was demanding \$500 million for such a deal, which led Gregg to quip, "So, Cheney Halliburton is bribing Nigeria to drop bribery charges?"

As Reuters reports, Halliburton and Nigeria are getting closer to a deal. Over the course of negotiations, though, it appears Halliburton has asked for half off of Nigeria's original demand, or a total fine of \$250 million.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) said it met with officials representing Cheney and Halliburton in London last week after filing 16-count charges at a federal high court in Abuja in a case dating back to the mid-1990s.

Halliburton, which has said the Nigerian charges have no legal basis, could not immediately be reached to comment on the outcome of the meeting. But EFCC spokesman Femi Babafemi said an offer had been made to pay fines totalling up to \$250 million.

"They have made offers of fines to be paid in penalties. They offered to pay \$120 million in addition to the repatriation of \$130 million trapped in Switzerland," Babafemi said.

"It will need to be ratified by the government and we expect a decision by the end of the week," he said.

It seems like the value of Cheney's freedom, like all other goods, declines the closer you

get to Christmas. Cheney better hope that Nigeria ratifies this deal soon though, because you never know what happens to goods left on the shelf after the holidays.