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10 best paid politicians

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WITH the world's leaders convening in London to solve some of the biggest problems in several generations, now is a good time to compare what they are paid.



Kevin Rudd, bottom left, has dinner at Downing St with some of his lesser-paid peers. Pic: Reuters

The Times has done just that, compiling **this list** of politicians' pay, measured for comparison's sake in US dollars. Once you get past highest paid, Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore, who is on S\$3.76 million (US\$2.47 million), the packages level out in the \$US200,000 to \$US400,000 range.

All fair and equitable, you might think. But how big are the countries run by these people? Does it figure that Barack Obama earns \$US400,000 for being President of the United States and Kevin Rudd takes home \$US229,000 for being top dog in Canberra?

We crunched the figures further. If you divide the salary by head of population, the ladder of remuneration is significantly reshuffled, and our own Prime Minister leaps from 10th to fourth while Obama slides from third to 10th. So by this measure, Rudd is earning roughly 10 times the US President, and that's not factoring in the freelance fee he pocketed for his **7000-word monologue** against free-market capitalism in *The Monthly*.

1. Lee Hsien Loong - Singapore

Salary: \$US2.47 million

Per head of population: 54c

2. Brian Cowen - Ireland

Salary: \$US341,000

Per head of population: 9c

3. Donald Tsang Yum-Kuen - Hong Kong

Salary: \$US516,000

Per head of population: 7c

4. Kevin Rudd - Australia

Salary: \$US229,000

Per head of population: 1c

5. Stephen Harper - Canada

Salary: \$US246,000

Per head of population: 0.7c

6. Nicolas Sarkozy - France

Salary: \$US318,000

Per head of population: 0.5c

7. Gordon Brown - UK

Salary: \$US279,000

Per head of population: 0.5c

8. Angela Merkel - Germany

Salary: \$US303,000

Per head of population: 0.4c

9. Taro Aso - Japan

Salary: \$US243,000

Per head of population: 0.2c

10. Barack Obama - United States

Salary: \$US400,000

Per head of population: 0.1c

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