

Does George Soros have a bad case of Fox envy against media mogul Rupert Murdoch? Or has he decided the main reason Americans won't embrace socialism is Fox News? Either way, he's now buying the news.

Soros, the billionaire speculator famous for bankrolling leftist causes, recently declared he was through with politics this election season because "I don't believe in standing in the way of an avalanche," referring to the likely GOP victory in November.

The 80-year-old leftist didn't earn his \$14 billion fortune making bad bets. So although he's given "only" \$53,100 in 2010 to Democratic candidates and causes (and his 24-year-old son has donated \$73,000), it's worth noting that Soros has shifted his attention to influencing the media message, with his cash following.

On Oct. 18, Soros donated \$1.8 million to National Public Radio to hire 100 new reporters for a project targeting state governments called "Impact of Government."

With the news industry laying off reporters, his idea is to fill a gap in coverage with all these spare journalists. But the new jobs won't precisely amount to truly independent ones — the reporters will have implicit obligations to Soros, who signs their paychecks.

Soros' idea isn't new. The model for this influence over the media via patronage journalism comes from Soros' allies Herb and Marion Sandler who made their fortune from issuing subprime mortgages.

Leaving that business just ahead of the 2008 crash, they set up Pro Publica to conduct investigative reporting and give it away free to the mainstream media.

The strings seem to be showing on the Soros donation to NPR, too.

Days after the Soros windfall was announced, National Public Radio fired liberal news analyst Juan Williams after he expressed an inoffensive personal view on the popular Fox News Channel.

Up until then, opinions by NPR correspondents and analysts had been expressed in abundance, but Williams' statement on Fox, because it was expressed on Fox, amounted to apostasy. The firing sends a message that Fox is beyond the pale and must be silenced.

If it sounds far-fetched, then how does one explain that Soros also made his first direct donation to Media Matters last week, reportedly at \$1 million, just after donating to NPR?

Led by disgraced journalist David Brock, Media Matters is a fringe-left nuisance organization that spends much of its time trying to dig up dirt on Fox News. Its Web site actually has a whole section devoted to criticizing Fox opinions and claiming they are lies.

The value to Soros is that it drives the news narrative leftward and attracts attention to its left-leaning message. After all, there's nothing the mainstream media in its vanity likes more than someone writing about it.

Yet another Soros donation worth noting came in September, when he shoveled \$100 million to the nongovernmental organization Human Rights Watch. It came shortly after HRW's then-operations director, Suzanne Nossell, was caught on a secretive list called JournoList actively plotting with other Soros-funded leftists to smear the political campaign of then-vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin.

"I think it is and can be spun as a profoundly sexist pick. Women should feel umbrage at the idea that their votes can be attracted just by putting a woman, any woman, on the ticket no matter her qualifications or views," Nossell wrote to the others.

When news of that broke, Palin had become a Fox News commentator and the Soros donation followed.

These aren't the first forays into media that Soros has attempted.

His Center for American Progress is obsessed with media ownership and using the "Fairness Doctrine" to silence Fox News.

He's also ventured into crazy left-wing radio like Air America, which failed to attract enough listeners and went bust. But this new wave of donations seems to arise out of a desire to seize control of a message in the wake of Democrats' unpopular socialist policies.

We've got news for Soros — Fox News follows what the people think, it doesn't issue its views from the top down. All the same, there's something strange and disturbing about a radical left-wing billionaire so obsessed with the success of Fox News.