

Letter on Payoff Forged, U.S. Says

9-23-76

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Washington Post Foreign Service

BONN, West Germany, Sept. 22 —The U.S. embassy here said today that the United States considers "to be a forgery", a letter allegedly written by former CIA chief Allen Dulles in November 1958 to former West German Defense Minister Franz-Josef Strauss that alludes to "subsidies" apparently earmarked for Strauss.

Strauss, then and now head of West German's Christian Social Union Party, has been the target of as-yet-unproven allegations by a former Lockheed employee that some 12 million in pay-offs were made to that party in connection with West Germany's purchase of some 900 F-104 Starfighter jets beginning in 1958. Strauss has vehemently denied the accusations.

An embassy statement said no evidence had been found that such a letter was ever written or that Dulles had ever served as an intermediary between Lockheed and other governments.

Moreover, the statement adds, it is considered "highly unlikely that he (Dulles) would have acted in such a capacity. On the basis of the available evidence, therefore, the U.S. government considers the letter to be a forgery."

The embassy statement is the fourth allegation this month of forgeries in the global Lockheed bribery scandal.

Last week, the West German Defense Ministry said that handwriting experts had established as forgeries some of the incriminating letters produced by Ernest Hauser, the former Lockheed agent who has alleged that bribes were paid to Strauss' party in the Lockheed purchases.

Two weeks ago, a Netherlands' commission reported that a memorandum alleging \$878,000 pay-off was "a forgery put in circulation by Mr. Hauser."

Earlier this month, a Lockheed spokesman also said documents published in the Italian magazine L'Espresso that linked Premier Giulio to Lockheed bribery charges, "appear to be forgeries."

The alleged Dulles letter, which was published by a German newspaper last week, was addressed to Franz J. Strauss, and said, in part: "I can confirm that the subject of subsidies, to which you alluded, will present no difficulties now that your contract with the firm has been successfully concluded."