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CIA-Linked Firm Sent Lockheed Cash to Japan

AGENCY'S ROLE IN '50s

By Ann Crittenden
New York Times News Service

NEW YORK — Many of the details of the bribery of Japanese politicians by the Lockheed Aircraft Corp. in connection with the sale of the F104 fighter plane to Japan in the late 1950s were reported to the CIA headquarters in Washington, according to a former CIA official and Japanese sources.

CIA headquarters was informed of the Lockheed payoffs through CIA channels from the embassy in Tokyo in the late 1950s. A Japanese citizen who worked for Lockheed in 1958, when certain bribes were known to have been made, has said he told a U.S. Embassy officer of these payoffs.

HE HAS DENIED having taken part in the payments himself and has said that he was unaware that the officer was a CIA agent. Former senior intelligence officials have confirmed that the embassy official was indeed a CIA staff officer assigned to the Tokyo station.

One former official who was in a position to see the reports said the CIA station in Tokyo "was checking with headquarters every step of the way when the Lockheed thing came up." He added that "every move made was approved by Washington," and asserted that details of the Lockheed affair were known in high levels within the agency.

Lockheed is estimated to have spent some \$1.5 million to win the Japanese jet fighter contract.

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WHEN INFORMED of the allegation, Mitchell Rogovin, special counsel to George Bush, the Director of Central Intelligence, said, "The only thing we can say is we have no records of any agency involvement with Lockheed or the bribes." He denied that the agency had participated in the payoffs.

Rogovin said he could say nothing either confirming or denying any agency knowledge of the payments to Japanese officials, or any involvement in them by CIA agents.

A spokesman for Lockheed denied the company had had any dealings with individuals in Japan that it knew to be CIA agents.