

SFChronicle
CIA Damage Claimed

Washington

An aviation firm filed a \$25-million damage claim against the CIA yesterday, contending that the intelligence agency illegally used its name as a cover to conduct covert operations and assassinations overseas.

General Aircraft Corp. of Bedford, Mass., asserted that use of the company's name without its knowledge, and the resulting notoriety, made it impossible for the firm to sell its airplanes in the countries where the CIA operated.

The CIA declined to comment on the charges.

According to the 22-page claim, General Aircraft representatives were about to close a sale of a large number of planes to the government of the Congo in the 1960s.

At the same time, the claim said, the CIA had agents in the Congo posing with forged papers as agents for Helio Aircraft, a General Aviation subsidiary.

"Such cover was used by these agents to carry on illegal and immoral activities which resulted in the death of government officials in the Congo and the fall of the existing government," the claim contended.

As a result, the claim said, Helio and its legitimate employees were expelled from the African country.

General Aircraft said it now is near bankruptcy mainly because of the CIA expropriation of its name.

Associated Press