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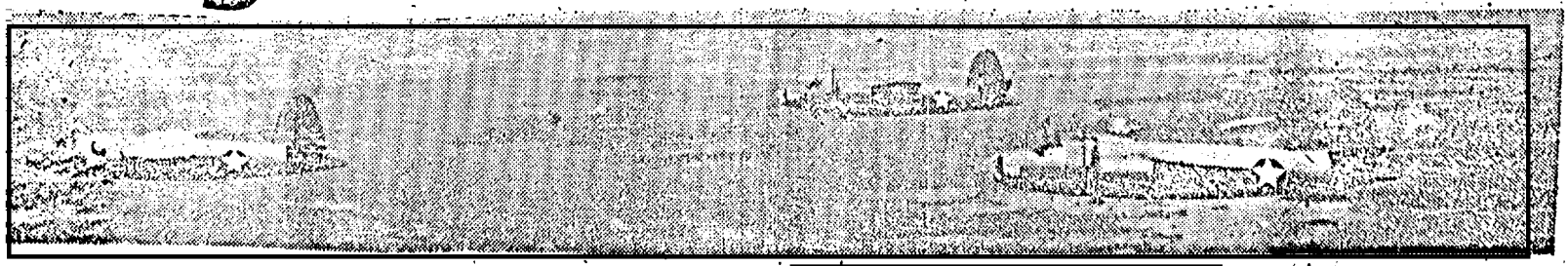
Files Show CIA Helped Portugal Get B-26's Against Africa Rebels

CIA 4 - Angola

CIA 4 Mozambique



B-26 U.S. Air Force bombers

BUFFALO, N. Y. — Complicity of the highest U.S. government agencies in the secret sale of seven B-26 bombers to Portugal was officially admitted here last week in Federal Court. The admission was made at the trial of John R. Hawke, a British pilot now living in Florida and Count Henri Marie Francois de Marin de Montmarin, a French airplane broker, charged with violation of the Munitions Control Act, which forbids export of military planes to a foreign country without a State Department license.

Edwin Marger, Hawke's attorney, has contended throughout the trial that the sale and flight of the bombers was a secret operation of the Central Intelligence Agency.

On a motion made by Marger, Lawrence R. Houston, general counsel of the CIA, opened the CIA's files for the court's inspection. These documents showed that the CIA was involved in the conspiracy to sell the bombers to Portugal and that the sale was known beforehand to the U.S. Defense Department, the Navy, the Air Force, the Army, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and 10 other federal agencies.

The planes were reportedly to have been used by Portugal to crush uprisings in her colonial territories of Angola and Mozambique.

Houston's statement was made following the testimony of Martin Caiden, aviation writer and former consultant to several Federal agencies, who charged that the CIA had been directly involved in the sale.

This was a direct contradiction of the Government's previous contention that the transaction was a private and illegal one.

Despite the fact that sales of military material are in violation of the Federal Munitions Control Act, Caiden said, he had beeen assured in conversations with Gregory H. Board, owner of a plane-leasing service and the man responsible for carrying out the transaction, that the flights of the planes to Portugal had been worked out in cooperation with the CIA. The defense has claimed that the flights to Portugal were not secret, and that flight plans and customs clearances had been obtained for all seven of the bombers.

Caiden also testified that he had discussed CIA participation in the project with several intelligence officers of the U.S. Air Force. He quoted one officer, Col. Charles Callahan of Patrick Air Force Base in Florida, as saying that "another government agency is involved in the case."

Following the arrest of Hawke and de Marin, Caiden stated, he was told by another Air Force colonel to "lay off the case" and to "stop putting on pressure."

"You just don't fly military aircraft out of the U.S. without some form of cooperation," Caiden told the jury.

He charged that at one time Hawke, trying to land one of the bombers in Washington, had flown directly over the White House. Though this is strictly forbidden, he went on, "no violation was ever filed against him." He said that he found this "incredible . . . based on my experience as a pilot."

One of the documents, dated May 25, 1965, indicated that the CIA had been aware of the pending flights four days before the first B-26 took off for Portugal. It contained data, apparently gathered in Lisbon, that the Portuguese Government had purchased "about 20 B-26 aircraft from a private firm . . . which are flown from a base in Texas to Canada where they are modified for extra fuel tanks to fly the Atlantic via an unknown refueling base."

(Previous testimony has established that Hawke flew the first bomber from Tucson to Rochester on May 29, and from there flew on to Portugal.)

Under further questioning Houston admitted that the information contained in the document had been sent to the various government agencies mentioned above.

Late last week, in response to renewed charges by a Hungarian delegate to the UN, the

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