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WEEKLY SAYS CIA AIDED AMIN TO MAINTAIN SPY OPERATION
NEW YORK

The CIA hauled arms and flew military missions against rebels for since-deposed Uganda ruler Idi Amin at a time the African nation was under a U.S. military embargo for human rights violations, a newspaper said today. STAT

The activity on behalf of the dictator a decade ago may have been illegal, but the CIA gave in to Amin's requests for fear of losing a spying operation it had established in Amin's air service, the Village Voice said.

The weekly said the spies in Amin's four-plane air service supplied Western intelligence services with "extraordinarily detailed information about Amin's activities." Vice President George Bush, the CIA head in 1976-77 when some of the flights occurred, said "no comment at this time" through his press office, the Voice said.

The newspaper said the flights were made in planes sold to Amin by Page Airways of Rochester and by a Swiss dealer who actually was an Israeli intelligence agent.

The air crews were supplied by Southern Air Transport of Miami, once secretly owned and operated by the CIA, which has recently flown weapons destined for Iran to the Middle East and also has shipped arms to the Nicaraguan contras, the Voice said.

The Voice said its information came from sealed court papers it had obtained from a 1978 civil lawsuit in which the Securities and Exchange Commission charged Page Airways with making bribes and questionable payments to foreign government officials.

The case was settled quietly two years later, with the SEC acknowledging it had taken into account "concerns raised by another agency of the U.S. government regarding matters of national interest." The Voice said officials involved in the case disclosed that the unnamed agency was the CIA.

In one of the depositions, a Southern Air pilot described how Southern Air and Page employees transported weapons, smuggled in stolen U.S. military equipment and engaged in military operations against Ugandan rebels for Amin, the Voice said.

Two Southern Air crew members said they were told "to transport weapons and assist in Ugandan military operations to remain in Amin's good graces," the Voice reported.

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