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Ex-Times Reporter Accused of Role in '53 Coup in Iran

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 25 — The editors of CounterSpy, a magazine that advocates the abolition of the Central Intelligence Agency, charged today that a former New York Times reporter helped the C.I.A. overthrow the Government of Iran in 1953 while working for The Times.

At a news conference here, the editors released an unpublished paper written in 1960 by the reporter, Kennett Love, which they said showed he aided in the overthrow of the Government of Mohammed Mossadegh by distributing C.I.A. "propaganda" and ordering tank commanders loyal to the rebellion to attack the home of Mr. Mossadegh on Aug. 19, 1953.

The coup restored Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlavi to power in Iran. The Shah was swept aside in 1979 by forces loyal to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Mr. Love, who left The Times in 1962, said in a telephone interview from his home in Easthampton, L.I., that he "never wittingly" aided or worked for the C.I.A.

While acknowledging that he had suggested to tank commanders that they attack forces near Mr. Mossadegh's home and had distributed copies of a decree by the Shah at the Park Hotel in Teheran hours before the coup, Mr. Love said he did not perform either deed at the direction of the C.I.A.

He said his failure to report on American involvement in the coup, once he learned about it later in 1953, was a result of "misguided patriotism." He charged editors of The Times with showing a "gross lack of interest" in the post-coup articles he did offer the paper, suggesting that that attitude indirectly reinforced

his decision not to disclose the American role in the coup.

The paper released by CounterSpy was written by Mr. Love for a seminar while he was a Carnegie Press Fellow at Princeton University.

Mr. Love, who covered the 1953 coup in Teheran for The Times, wrote at Princeton that on the eve of the revolt he distributed copies of a decree from the Shah that named Gen. Fazollah Zahedi as Prime Minister, replacing Mr. Mossadegh. He added that a C.I.A. agent, Joe Goodwin, had taken him to the home where he received copies of the decree for an interview with General Zahedi.

Mr. Love said today that in 1953 he did not even know what the C.I.A. was and only later learned that Mr. Goodwin had been an American intelligence agent. He said he did not piece together the connection between his actions in 1953 and C.I.A. interests until long after he left Teheran.

Mr. Love called the CounterSpy charges "irresponsible" and "unfounded," and said he had asked his lawyer to prepare to sue the editors of the magazine for libel.

A. M. Rosenthal, executive editor of The Times, issued the following statement on the Love matter today:

"No editor or executive on this paper has any knowledge of what Mr. Love was supposed to have done 27 years ago. What every editor and executive on this paper does know, however, is that The New York Times has an absolute rule against any reporter working for any government agency. This paper has repeatedly urged President Carter to reverse the C.I.A.'s present policy of permitting use of journalists as agents when the Director of Central Intelligence approves.

"We are confident that no member of The New York Times would agree to be used by the C.I.A. But not until the C.I.A.'s policy is publicly reversed will there be total confidence abroad that the C.I.A. and other government agencies are respecting the spirit of the First Amendment and not getting involved with the press."